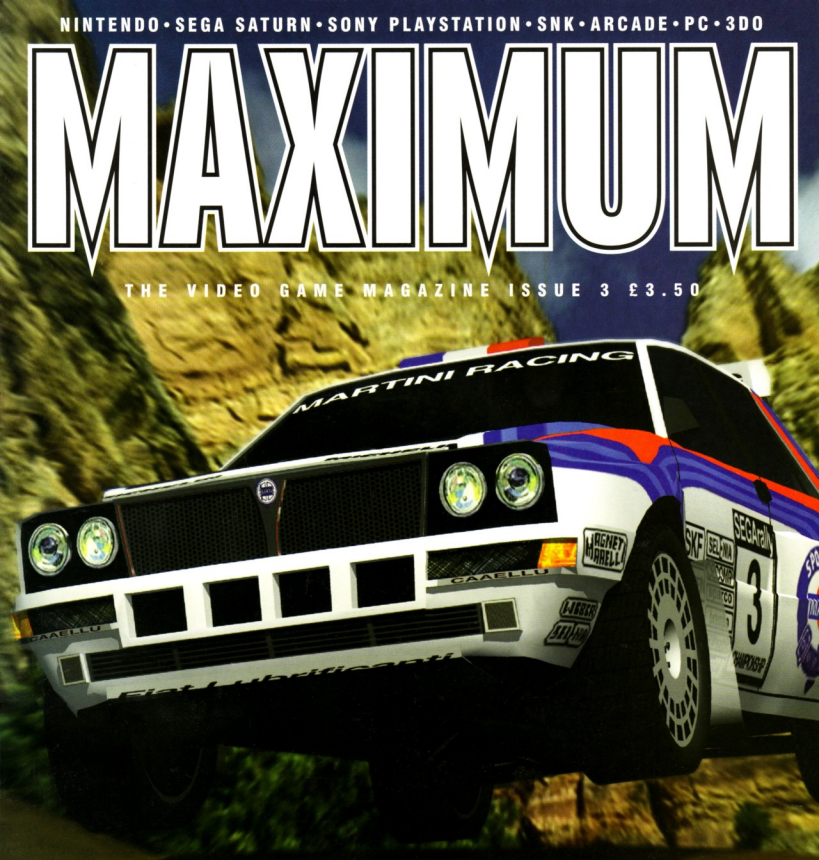
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MAXIMUM

THE VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE ISSUE 3 £3.50



SEGA RALLY

THE SECRETS OF SEGA'S SUPERLATIVE SATURN RACER!

RESIDENT EVIL • VIRTUA COP • MARVEL SUPER HEROES • VIRTUA FIGHTER 2









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MEGA DRIVE

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the GAME,
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THE CONTENTS OF

MAXIMUM

THE VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE ISSUE 3

MAXIMUM EXTENDED PLAY

SEGA RALLY *PAGE 6*
Saturn Racing Game by AM3/CS Team
Current Release, £49.99
This month's cover game is followed up in gratuitous detail in true **MAXIMUM** style. The full range of hidden extras and secret modes is revealed, plus we take a return visit to the R&D labs of the CS conversion team and quiz them about their final thoughts on the finished game.

MARVEL SUPER HEROES *PAGE 14*
Arcade Fighting Action Game by Capcom
Current Release
Just as X-Men: Children of the Atom is taking the Saturn market by storm, Capcom unleash their latest coin-op masterpiece onto the arcade scene. **MAXIMUM** provides ultimate detailage on this utterly spectacular game. If you thought X-Men or Street Fighter Alpha was good, you ain't seen nothing...

FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 *PAGE 28*
PlayStation/Saturn 3D Shooting Game by Core Design
Current Release, £49.99
Every so often it's a pleasure to see an English software house producing quality goods - and such is the case with Core Design and their excellent Thunderhawk 2 game. **MAXIMUM** investigates.

DOOM *PAGE 34*
PlayStation 3D Shooting Game by GT Software
Current Release, £44.99
We thought we'd covered everything possible in our five-page Doom feature in **MAXIMUM** issue #2. We were wrong. We have since discovered that the only real way to play the game is in two-player link-up mode! Full details on the Cooperative and Deathmatch modes plus recommended play is revealed.

VIRTUA COP *PAGE 38*
Saturn 3D Shooting Game by Sega/AM2
Current Release, £44.99/£59.99 (with gun)
When AM2 release a new Saturn game, the world sits up and takes notice. It may not have the profile of Virtua Fighter 2, but there us absolutely no doubt that Virtua Cop is a most significant contribution to Sega Saturn gaming. And we defy anyone to beat our ranking score (pictured in the feature).

SAMURAI SHODOWN 3 *PAGE 48*
Neo Geo Fighting Action Game by SNK
Current Release, £59.99
Currently taking the arcades by storm is the latest SNK Samurai Shodown fighting game. And now it's out on Neo Geo CD as well. **MAXIMUM** provides gargantuan levels of information for your perusal.

X-MEN: CHILDREN OF THE ATOM *PAGE 64*
Saturn Fighting Action Game by Capcom
February Release, Price Unconfirmed
As promised in **MAXIMUM** issue #2, the balance of the X-Men coverage. Storm, Psylocke, Sentinel and Spiral are revealed, along with the game's bosses. Here you'll also find both methods for revealing the game's hidden character, Akuma. And turn to page 113 NOW for the much-coveted Juggernaut boss code.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 *PAGE 172*
Saturn 3D Fighting Action Game by Sega/AM2
Current Release, Price £49.99
In another **MAXIMUM** follow-up, we return to Sega's awesome Virtua Fighter 2, going in-depth on the characters we missed out last month as well as examining the play mechanics of the title and examining version 2.1. Here's a bonus tidbit of info: on Jacky's stage have both players press A, B, C, X, Y and Z....

TEKKEN 2 *PAGE 88*
Arcade 3D Fighting Action Game By Namco
Current Release
The extreme levels of Tekken 2 information continue apace in this - what is probably the last Tekken 2 feature we produce until the PlayStation version appears sometime in the next few of months. Look here for complete details on Bruce, Yoshimitsu, Paul, Law and Jun. Plus, we go in-depth on the new Version B Tekken 2 upgrade...

RETURN FIRE: MAPS O' DEATH *PAGE 60*
3DO Shooting Game by Silent Software
Current Release, Price Unconfirmed
Here's a turn-up - a 3DO game deemed worthy enough for the **MAXIMUM** close-up treatment. True, it's only a new set of levels for Return Fire - so this is something of a mini-feature, weighing in at a light three pages of catch-up coverage.

MAXIMUM REGULARS

NEW GAMES... PLACES... EVENTS... *PAGE 100*
For the ultimate in news coverage, look no further than **MAXIMUM**'s enormous 37 page section, packed with more consoles knowledge than you'd ever dream possible. Ultra 64 gets its Japanese debut! Toshinden 2 and Street Fighter Alpha arrive on PlayStation! In-depth interviews with Capcom and Namco R&D! Guardian Heroes on Saturn is stunning! EXCLUSIVE play as Juggernaut X-Men Stop Press code! Let there be no doubt about our news-gathering skills.

REVIEWS *PAGE 139*
The current crop of Saturn, PlayStation, 3DO, Neo Geo and PC games explored in our Buyers Guide - written by experts for people who value their money. From the looks of it this month, it appears that Saturn owners have got the most reason to spend huge amounts of money on quality software...



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cover image
AM R&D Department #3.


POLICE





Prepare to burn rubber in the ultimate Saturn driving experience!

SEGA RALLY - AM3's awesome arcade racer is superlative on Sega Saturn!!

The ultimate in rallying realism is finally available in the UK!





Test drive the greatest racing machines from rally constructors Fiat and Toyota!

SEGA RALLY HAS ARRIVED - ENHANCED FOR THE UK MARKET!







The Saturn's 3D capabilities are put to work on creating the fastest arcade road racer to date. Running at 30 frames a second (25 on the UK version), Sega Rally Championship shows that the Saturn can more than hold its own in the 3D arena.

By now, just about everyone should have savoured the choice Saturn games fodder that is AM3's conversion of the phenomenal Sega Rally coin-op. Boasting superlative 30 frames per second action and an uncanny simulated feel to the driving action, there's absolutely no doubt that this is one of the premiere Saturn driving experiences, which is fully reviewed in our Sega criticism section beginning on page 140.

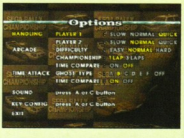
The development of the Saturn conversion began shortly after the arrival of Daytona USA on the shelves of Japanese shops in April. Tetsuya Mizuguchi, the AM3 team leader responsible for the coin-op, began collaboration with Sega's own CS (Consumer Software) team in bringing the arcade machine over to the Saturn. It was around this time that AM2 first revealed their SGL 3D software, which promised to revolutionise Saturn 3D. Although arriving in plenty of time for the then forthcoming conversions of Virtua Fighter 2 and Cop, it was not made available to the CS team until their own 3D routines were complete. Considering that many viewed Rally's 3D as being the best ever seen on Saturn (just on the evidence of the pre-release alpha edition), this is testament to the skills of the CS conversion team.

However, the proof the pudding is in the gameplay (as it were) and once again, the CS team have come up trumps with a near-perfect translation of the arcade original. As usual, whenever **MAXIMUM** judges an arcade conversion, we return to the coin-op and perform a side-by-side analysis and despite a much lower graphical resolution, the CS team have performed miracles in converting across the handling of each car to the Saturn - even without the presence of a steering wheel with realistic feedback.

This Rally feature contains just about every hidden facet of Sega Rally. The hidden track triggers are revealed along with a big feature on the secret car: the Lancia Stratos. Continuing the unparalleled Rally coverage, **MAXIMUM** takes a return visit to the CS conversion team's headquarters at Sega of Japan where we quiz them about their thoughts on the final game.







PAL RALLY IS BETTER THAN USA IMPORT!

It's not very often that **MAXIMUM** can honestly say that a PAL version of a game surpasses its NTSC incarnation. However, we are quite justified in saying that this is the case with the official UK Sega Rally - and therein lies a story...

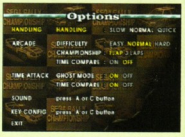


You see, the version of the game released first was the US game, which was rush-released to meet the Christmas market. In actual fact, although there's nothing actually wrong with it as such, the game isn't finished. Any one who compares the Japanese version (released about a month later) to the US game will notice many differences which serve to make it significantly superior. **MAXIMUM** can reveal that the PAL version is based on the latter Japanese version rather than the US game.

So what are the differences? To be honest, when listing them down in type, it doesn't really seem to make that much of a difference. The sky graphics on one stage have been improved, and some big changes have been made to the front-end of the game, offering more options than seen on the older version. The one graphically ropey part of the game - the hairpin turn on the forest course - has also received a facelift, with a scaling mountain backdrop appearing behind the polygons, which tidies up this part of the game significantly. We were a tad disheartened to hear that the hilarious "game over - yeah!" lyric on the game over music has been removed, but you can't really complain.



So PAL Rally is better than the US game, but how does it compare to the Japanese version? Sega promised a full-screen, full-speed version and they have certainly delivered. Although the frame rate is slightly slower (as in Cop and VF2), the game's speed has been adjusted to compensate and the result is a game that is nigh-on identical to the Japanese original. It's another feather in the cap for Sega, who have so far delivered near-perfect PAL conversions of all their latest hot games.



See for yourself - The UK version (top) has a rather lovely scaled mountain to look at as you take the hair-pin turn, whereas the US version looks a bit more bare. It's clear that the CS conversion team also took a bit more time with the UK option (third picture down) - extra options are available when compared to the USA import version (bottom).



EXTENDED PLAY

LANCIA STRATOS REVEALED AS SEGA RALLY BONUS SPORTSCAR!

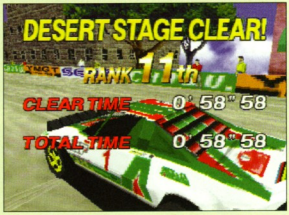
As just about everyone knows by now, there is a hidden "bonus" car secreted in Sega Rally, which is instantly accessible when you complete the Super Advanced Lakeside track in first position (see the attached box for full details on every way to add this car to the roster of Celica and Delta).

The Stratos is one of the most famous cars in rallying history, hailing from a past time when rallying conditions were far removed from what they are today. The most surprising aspect of its origin is the time frame in which it first appeared. Despite its mid-eighties Japanese sportscar-styled appearance, the car actually debuted in the San Remo Rally in 1974 - bear in mind that at this point, its nearest competitor was a suped-up edition of the model two Ford Escort.

The Lancia Stratos features a mid-mounted engine lifted from a Ferrari Dino sportscar, offering 2.4 litres of transversely mounted V6 power, all fitted inside a revolutionary fibre-glass shell (which was astoundingly light for its time). With a power level rated at around 250 brake-horsepower, the Stratos was in the same league overall as its competitors of the time, although its superior engine gave it superior power at lower revs. A rally car needs to be both

LOCATE THE LANCIA STRATOS - THE HIDDEN RALLY CAR!





resilient and adaptable to the myriad conditions offered in racing, and the Stratos performed well in the Safari rallies but the car was really at home on a tarmac surface (just as well as the Lancia team's home rally - the Monte - was predominantly tarmac).

The track record of the Stratos was remarkable, with the car virtually winning every major race between 1974 and 1976. After this period, the car was virtually disowned by Fiat, although it was still winning races as late as 1981. A superior Stratos was developed by Lancia (which pundits reckon could easily have won everything), but due to political reasons the car was dropped. Lancia's owner, Fiat, had its own designs about winning the world championship with their own new car and it was easy for them to stop further development on the Stratos, which was subsequently phased out.

THE SEGA RALLY STRATOS

So how does the Stratos compare to the Delta and Celica in Sega Rally - and how close is it in performance to the real thing?

The big difference between the cars is the fact that the Stratos is rear-wheel drive only, which makes for a totally different driving experience to the four-wheel drive capabilities of the Delta and Celica. When it comes to taking corners, you'll find that the Stratos' rear wheels tend to skid around that much further. This is pretty much close to the real Stratos - its handling was one of the problems associated with the car, although some drivers learned to use it to their advantage.

The real bone of contention about the Saturn Stratos has to be its overall performance, which has a top speed of around 155 mph - faster than the Delta or Celica by quite some margin. Can a 20-year-old sportscar really outperform the best that today's machines have to offer? Evening things out, the Stratos' performance at low to medium revs is poor in relation to the other cars in Sega Rally. This means that on courses with many sudden turns (Lakeside springs to mind), the Stratos is disadvantaged. Surface is also important. Just like the real thing, the Saturn rendition of the Stratos favours tarmac, making the Mountain course a good place to take it out for a spin.

Overall, the Stratos is a very fast car, but only people who can successfully get to grips with its difficult handling are likely to break any records with it...



Although an older rallying car, the Stratos is something of a legend that's obviously still remembered in the present day. The CS team's rendition of the car is pretty spot-on, complete with the official Lancia colourisation and sponsorship.

The Stratos is very popular in Japan, as readers of the last edition's CS team interview will probably remember.



The Sega Rally rendition of the Stratos has a great high-speed but suffers in terms of mid-range torque and handling. Advancements in technology make the Celica and Delta far easier to drive.





Once the Stratos trigger has been activated, the car is available to use in any of the game's modes (see the next page for full details). In two-player mode, it can create a super-fast game when using the slow car boost. If the Stratos gets ahead, its opponent gains enough speed to overtake the supercar, resulting in some incredibly fast races.





ACCESSING STRATOS

There are two different ways to add the Stratos to the roster of vehicles found in Sega Rally Championship. Everyone knows the difficult way - here, **MAXIMUM** reveals all the different Stratos permutations. It should be noted that once you have activated either cheat, it is added to your Sega Rally save position, along with all of your best times.

1. Come First on Lakeside

To be honest, although initially quite difficult, this is the only real way to activate the Stratos trigger. With either the Delta or Celica, you need to come first on the Lakeside track. The Stratos is then available for use. On the Desert course, you need tenth position or better. For the Forest track, finish in fourth or better and of course, you need first position on the Mountain track before defending your title on the advanced Lakeside track! A condition for success is the difficulty level: the Stratos is only added if the game is set on NORMAL difficulty of harder. However, both one and three lap championship matches are valid.





2. The Button-Press Cheat

Only to be used if you accidentally wiped your Rally save position! On the mode select screen (where you choose Arcade, Time Attack etc) press X, Y, Z, Y, X. Instant Stratos action is yours.

Every Stratos mode revealed - Cheesy button-press cheat included!

STRATOS IN ARCADE MODE

Once the Stratos trigger has been initiated, you'll see that the car is instantly added to the two-player mode and time attack game modes. However, it's a simple matter to find the Stratos when playing in the Arcade modes of Championship or Practice. On the car select screen, simply press left a few times to uncover the automatic Stratos. The manual beast is found in a similar manner, although this time press right a few times to reveal it.



Keep on pressing either right or left on this screen to gain either the manual or the automatic Stratos in Arcade mode. It works on either Championship or practice modes.

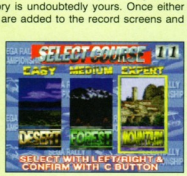


SUPER-ADVANCED COURSE: LAKESIDE

This is yet another "open" secret that just about everyone is aware of - the existence of the super-advanced "hidden" track: Lakeside. You get the opportunity to race on this track on reaching first position by the end of the Mountain course. However, you can only add it to your time attack and two-player races by completing the track in the allotted time. You don't need to be first. Indeed, you probably won't be first. What you need to do is really practise the course on the Time Attack before returning to the Championship. The key to success is to master the early turns specifically - then victory is undoubtedly yours. Once either Lakeside trigger has been activated, the Lakeside times are added to the record screens and you can also hear the Lakeside music on the sound test.

1. Super Cheese Lakeside Button-Press Cheat

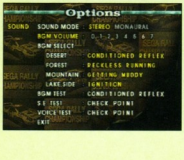
Again, **MAXIMUM** only recommends using this cheat if you have accidentally wiped your Rally saved position on the Saturn's back-up memory. On the mode select screen (with Arcade, Time Attack etc), hold down X and Y together. That's it. It really is as simple as that. As with the other Lakeside trigger, once this has been activated, the new track is automatically added to your saved position.





2. Lakeside Activated in Arcade Mode

Once the Lakeside trigger is active, the course can be accessed on the Arcade mode's practise section. Just press right on the Mountain course to reveal the Lakeside addition to the track select screen.



The Lakeside trigger also enables you to access the level music in the sound test - as the rather useful picture to the right reveals. Alternatively, just play the disc in your CD player.



Once the Lakeside trigger has been activated, it's possible to race on it in ever conceivable mode - arcade (above), two-player, time attack... You name it. For a real challenge, race Lakeside with the Stratos!

RALLY EXTRAS! The final trio of tricks including Hyper Cars and Mirror Mode!

The final set of tricks for Sega Rally is a mixture of the subtle and the dramatic. The camera zoom cheat offers very little entertainment, whilst the other two are totally excellent, boosting your enjoyment of Sega Rally to near stratospheric levels. Read on...



HYPER CAR FOR ULTIMATE SPEED!

This secret mode was designed to take the Sega Rally's engine to its limits in terms of speed and playability. Without compromising the feel of the title, the speed of the entire game is increased giving the appearance of higher top speeds and better grip. There is no visual indication that the cheat has taken effect and to be honest, you can't really see the difference unless you are using the internal viewpoint.

Activated by holding down X while you select your car, the Hyper Car mode is excellent fun. Combined with the high-speed excesses of the Stratos, it's quite entertaining, but you do notice the difference in handling on the Delta and Celica.

Since the balance of the game has been altered significantly, a new records screen for Hyper Car best times appears, logging your achievements separately to normal game activities.





Check out these hidden modes and get the most out of Sega Rally!

Because you activate the hidden modes on different screens, it is possible to combine all of the cheats together. For example, you can race the Stratos in Hyper Car mode with a mirrored course! Not bad...



BOOST RALLY LONGEVITY FURTHER WITH MIRROR MODE!

This is perhaps the most dramatic hidden feature in Sega Rally, allowing you to play mirrored versions of each of the four tracks. Everything about each of the tracks is totally reversed. Not just the corners and the positioning of the scenery - even the texture-maps themselves are mirrored. Just like the Hyper Car feature, the mirror mode is easily activated. On the select game screen (where you choose either Practise or Championship options), simply hold down Y when you make your selection.

ENHANCE YOUR REPLAY ACTION WITH CAMERA ZOOMING!

When you complete the Lakeside track in first position, you are treated to an excellent replay of your race viewed from a variety of camera angles. It's possible to affect the zoom of the camera by using the following button combination. Hold down Z and down together, and effect the zoom by using either the L or R buttons, depending on whether you wish to zoom in or out. And it works on any normal replay too! Smart.



In the mirror mode you can see that the entire course has been reversed. That means that the framework of every 3D object is mirrored and that all of the texture maps have now been totally reversed - hence the rather original way of depicting the word "Finish" above. The mirror mode adds a great deal of longevity to Sega Rally Championship - an aspect of the game that the CS team are justifiably proud of (see the interview on the next page).

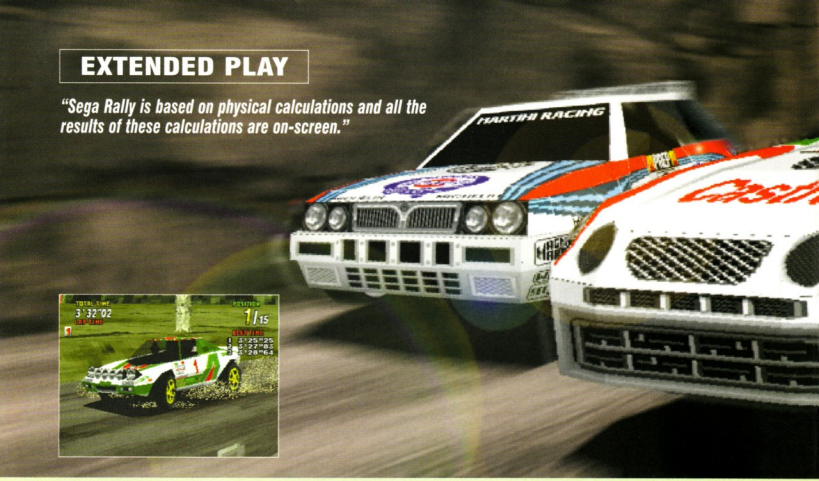






We got these rather unusual and dramatic screen grabs using the zoom in replay mode. A small, but quite interesting hidden mode.

"Sega Rally is based on physical calculations and all the results of these calculations are on-screen."



MAXIMUM return visit to AM3 headquarters! CS Team talk about the SEGA RALLY secrets and the Stratos!

With an import copy or two of Sega Rally in the possession of the **MAXIMUM** team, we arranged an interview with the key members of the CS team to discuss their closing thoughts on Sega Rally now that the project has finally reached a conclusion. Ryuichi Hattori (senior programmer), Atsuhiko Nakamura (project director), Hiroto Kikuchi (team manager) and Ryoihi Hasegawa of the CS Team were present to share their insights with **MAXIMUM**.

MAXIMUM What are your thoughts on the completed Sega Rally conversion?

Mr Hattori The details of the graphics and the sound of the cars are there and I think that on the whole I'm quite happy with them.

MAXIMUM What are you particularly pleased with?

Mr Hattori The movement of the cars now approaches that of the arcade game, which I'm very pleased about.

MAXIMUM Which part of the conversion process particularly concerned you?

Mr Hattori Everything! No, probably the movement of the cars. Then there were the graphics; with our reputation they had to be excellent. We wanted to use a lot of polygons, but then the frame rate would have lessened so we had to think about the balance.

Mr Nakamura This level of quality in the graphics and movement was not really possible without Saturn's 30 frames per second processing. I think we attained the highest level we anticipated before starting on the project.

Mr Hattori Of course, it's also a question of timing. The consumers want to have access to the conversion as soon as possible.



MAXIMUM We have the impressions that it was made in quite a short time...

Mr Hattori Yes, that's about right.

MAXIMUM Why was the split-screen two-player mode decided upon? Why not a link-up facility?

Mr Hattori It was a question of scheduling.

Mr Nakamura We didn't feel there would be a suitable cable available for the software by the time of the launch. Also, we felt that there would not be many users able to link up two machines, so the two-player mode was made more user-friendly. This is something of a complicated question.

Mr Hattori Speed was an issue. We wanted to release it before the end of the year. If we'd had until March 1996, maybe we could have produced a suitable cable. Technically, it isn't that difficult.

MAXIMUM Did you take any comments from consumers when developing Sega Rally?

Mr Hattori We always consider them carefully, but in practise they always seem to arrive too late for us to act on. Our team has done racing games before, so to a fair degree we already know our work, but every year we're always being told what to do! I think that we have managed to fulfil most of the consumers' requirements.

MAXIMUM Was the plan to convert Sega Rally forced upon you? [Much laughter breaks out at this point]

Mr Hattori It was right to do the conversion. It wasn't *that* difficult.

Mr Nakamura They mean technically, not strategically.

Mr Hattori Oh yes, that was forced on us, because it's not just anyone who could have done it. To be honest, I think that if someone else had tried it, I don't think it would have been done. There are probably only about 12 people in the world who could have done it.

MAXIMUM Going back to the beginnings of Sega Rally, why were the Celica and Delta chosen?

Mr Kikuchi Well, there were many factors. We felt that in the rally, we



"The direction we have taken with Sega Rally is completely different and you simply can't compare it to other games."



had to use real rally cars and the chosen vehicles were well known and looked good. Although there were a number of candidates, these were really the only ones and we felt that we had to choose them.

MAXIMUM Did you ever consider any other rally cars?
Mr Hattori Originally there was talk of using another car from Toyota, but we couldn't find a good one. For example, the Supra would have been just the same as the Celica and not much fun to use in the game, so we ended up with just the one. We also took note of the consumers' opinions, which confirmed that if another car was to be added it should be the Stratos.

MAXIMUM How does driving the Stratos differ to the other cars?
Mr Hattori What can I say? Of course their performance is different. The Celica is four-wheel drive, whilst the Stratos is just rear-wheel drive, so it's more difficult. The engine power is improved and that is the maximum speed. The steering is quicker. Overall, the Stratos is a lot more difficult to handle. However, with practise, the Celica can be driven faster than the other car - the Lancia Delta.

MAXIMUM What are the good and bad points of the Stratos?
Mr Hattori The good point is its speed - it travels well at high speeds. The bad news is that it is very difficult to drive - you have to be quite an advanced driver to handle it well. If you just started off with it [as a novice player], you probably wouldn't even be able to drive straight.

MAXIMUM How does Sega Rally improve the Saturn's profile? At the moment Saturn and PlayStation are fighting for market share and there'll be new racing games on the Sony machine. What does Rally do for Saturn that these games don't do for PlayStation?
Mr Hattori Sega Rally isn't inferior in any way - it has the two-player mode, the ghost mode and it's a simulation.
Mr Kikuchi But compared to Ridge Racer, the car movements aren't as smooth. Ridge Racer has a drift system in which the car appears to be on invisible rails. Our game is based on physical calculations and all the results of these calculations are on-screen - for example, the friction of the road or the shock absorbers. And the game has a car edit feature. The results of all our mathematics are reflected in the game itself. Basically, the direction we have taken with our game is completely different and you can't simply compare it to other games.

MAXIMUM What reaction have you received from the press?
Mr Kikuchi When we did the first alpha promotion, the media were extremely impressed with the quality, but we were able to upgrade this quality still further in the final version. The reaction we received was that everybody's expectations were exceeded.

MAXIMUM What is the next project for the CS team?
Mr Nakamura It's not yet decided.

MAXIMUM What about Manx TT?
Mr Hattori This is Mr Mizuguchi's AM3 team title... and there's not yet been talk of converting it to Saturn.

MAXIMUM What games would *you* like to program?
Mr Hattori There are many things I want to make - for example, puzzle games. But since we've just finished Sega Rally we have no clear idea what we're going to be doing next. I just want to make games that please everyone... Of course, we have our own personal opinions. Speaking in abstract terms, I'd like to make some serious games - not just games for fun - games which don't just end when you're clear, but which you can go back to and spend many hours on. Or alternatively, games which just take a very long time to complete.

MAXIMUM Now you've programmed Sega Rally, you must be pretty aware of Saturn's strong and weak points. Would this affect the choice of your next project?
Mr Hattori I can't say that the weak points [of the Saturn] have ever stopped us from doing what we wanted to do. We would try anything.

MAXIMUM Any final comments about the Rally project?
Mr Hattori We feel the game has great longevity. You can play it for hours and the more you play it, the more you'll find. We want players to play it for as long as possible.

MAXIMUM Many thanks.

MARVEL SUPER HEROES - Experience the most explosive battles of all time!!

MARVEL SUPER-BEINGS BATTLE WITH REALITY AT STAKE!





When Capcom release a new fighting coin-op, the legions of arcade gamers across the world tend to take notice - since the arrival of Street Fighter II in 1991, no one has been able to match Capcom's consistent excellence in the field of combat games. This tradition continues with the arrival of the latest Capcom title - Marvel Super Heroes.

In many ways, the game is a sequel to the incredibly popular X-Men: Children of the Atom - a title that has been successfully converted on Sega Saturn. It features four characters from the first game, who by and large, are unchanged from their debut appearances in X-Men. However, the game is a lot more than just a mere update, featuring appearances from some of the mightiest characters in all of the Marvel Universe. Yes, for the first time, characters such as the Hulk and Spider-Man appear in a videogame and actually depicts them pretty well - quite remarkable when you consider the god awful Marvel translations we've had to put up with in the past.

ENTER THE INFINITY WAR!

This particular excursion into the Marvel Universe is backed up with a storyline from the comics themselves - in this case, the Infinity War series of crossovers perpetrated by Marvel a few years ago. For those of you not "into" the comics, it doesn't really matter since the actual storyline bears little actual resemblance to the game.

However, for the record, a mighty force for evil - Thanos of Titan - has a taste for ultimate power. After several skirmishes with the Universe's mightiest heroes, he obtains the Infinity Gauntlet, which draws its powers from five different Infinity Gems. In the comics, this involved just about all of the Marvel heroes ganging up and fighting him... and losing. In the end, Thanos's subconscious feeling of unworthiness caused him to lose the Gauntlet and all was well (until the following year's money-spinning crossover that is, when once again the universe was threatened by some celestial Armageddon). In the arcade game, just about all that remains of these Infinity storylines is: Thanos, the gems, and um, that's about it.



THE INFINITY GEMS

One of the most notable additions to the X-Men formula is the inclusion of the Infinity Gems. In the comics, these give the bearer power over all reality. In Marvel Super Heroes, they tend to have various power-up effects. The gems usually appear when a good combination hits home and are collected simply by walking over them. Once you have a collection of gems in your possession, use

The master of science and sorcery awaits...

DOCTOR DOOM

"Doom is supreme! There is no power on Earth to equal to mine!"



Doctor Doom is without doubt one of the most powerful forces on Earth, and on many occasions he has sought to gain power of galactic proportions. Previous credits include stealing the Power Cosmic from the Silver Surfer and even enjoying a stint of omnipotence when he stole the power of the mysterious Beyonder.

Hiding his scarred face behind his armour, Doom is a master of both science and sorcery, making him the most evil, powerful supervillain on the face of the Earth. Although he has teamed himself with the heroes against Thanos, it's pretty obvious that at the first opportunity, he will attempt to appropriate the power of the Infinity Gems.





Doom's appearance masks a physically strong opponent. Although designed to instill fear, his armour is a lot more powerful than Iron Man's, crammed with high-tech devices such as lasers and molecular expanders (which explains why rocks might appear out of nowhere and crush you). A daunting opponent.

A montage of battle shots between the Amazing Spider-Man and Dr Doom. In the comics, Spidey wouldn't really last very long against the sorcerous power of Latveria's monarch.











In Victor Von Doom's laboratory, the doctor is supreme! Armed with a vast amount of weaponry, it'll take more than web-shields to defend Spidey from the wrath of Doom!



the START button to choose between them. Invoke a particular gem with quarter-circle from down to back along with all three punch buttons. A meter appears at the base of the screen which steadily decreases. During this time, the gem's particular effect takes hold (see below for the basic list). Additionally, each character has a special gem which grants them dramatic power. The details of these are all found with the respected character later on in the Extended Play.

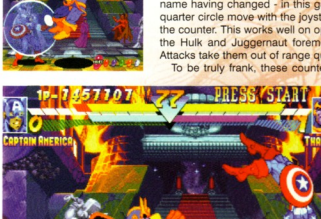
If this addition to the X-Men formula is not to your liking, it can be disabled in two-player games. Both players should should hold down START at the beginning of each match (when the game says "Round one! Fight!". Signifying that the change has taken place is the message NO GEMS at the bottom of the screen.



ENTER... THE INFINITY COUNTER!

One of the more subtle, yet successful additions made to Capcom's last fighting game, Street Fighter Alpha, was the Alpha counter, which turns an opponent's attack against them. The same concept has made its way into Marvel Super Heroes. In fact, it's identical, with only the name having changed - in this game, the move is now called an Infinity Counter. Perform a quarter circle move with the joystick from back to down along with a punch button to initiate the counter. This works well on opponents using a charging special move (Captain America, the Hulk and Juggernaut foremost amongst them), but not on characters whose Infinity Attacks take them out of range quickly (such as Spider-Man's Maximum Spider strike).

To be truly frank, these counter-attacks aren't so hot. As stated above, it's not so great against more agile characters and it uses up precious Infinity Energy, which you really should be using for your own super-moves.















Wielder of the Infinity Gauntlet - Thanos is supreme! For now...

THANOS OF TITAN

"Begone foolish miscreants - or suffer my celestial wrath!"

Thanos of Titan is in love with Death - the mysterious lady who guides all souls from this existence into oblivion. In order to become her consort, he has appropriated the Infinity Gems and attempts to win her affections by laying waste to the cosmos. With but a whim, he obliterates half of the sentient life in the universe, which causes the heroes to come after him. Lady Death is still not impressed, so Thanos attempts to impress her by using only some of the Infinity powers against his opponents, giving his foes a .05% chance of success.

With near-omnipotence at his disposal, Thanos, the game's main boss, proves to be just as much of a pain in the ass as his predecessor - Children of the Atom's Magneto. Although his basic fighting style is pretty pathetic, it's in the power of the Infinity Gems that Thanos becomes problematic. A huge amount of different celestial attacks are at his disposal, and beating him with any of the heroes will be an incredibly difficult task.





More close-up high-resolution action from Virtua Fighter 2 as Akira (left) and Kage (below) perform some of their older throwing techniques against newcomer Lion Rafale.

1. REALITY
Using this gem causes much weirdness to happen - the most common phenomena involves ice shards appearing on-screen which fall on the opponent.

2. POWER
This was probably quite easy for Capcom to translate into the combat game genre. Power causes your character to hit more strongly.

3. TIME
Again, this is pretty easy to figure out. Activating the Time gem invokes a speed-up, the effects of which are readily apparent.

4. SOUL
The Soul gem enables the holder to possess the essence of living beings... in the comics. Here, the gem merely has a life-restoring effect.

5. SPACE
In what must be the most far-fetched use for one of the Infinity Gems, the Space jewel has the effect of granting extra armour for its lucky owner.



MUTANT POWER: ***THUNDER SLAM***

Use a fierce attack to stun your foe then shatter their bones with the deadly Thunder Slam. Bolts of lightning rise from Hell and inflict heavy damage. Yes please!

BLACKHEART

"I shall corrupt the very souls of all who oppose me!"

This mysterious creature thrives on pure evil, and already has a considerable amount of power at his disposal. He is not a native to this dimension, being the only son of Mephisto (Marvel's closest stab at bringing Satan into the comics) and has the power to phase in and out of our existence. Blackheart can also choose between physical and non-corporeal forms - in fact, his dash attack involves him turning to slime and slithering across the floor, making him look more suited to a DarkStalkers game rather than a Marvel inspired title.

As you can see, he doesn't have much in the way of special moves. In fact, in terms of lever combination-orientated moves, he only has a paltry two at his disposal (disregarding his Infinity Attack). This is mainly because his basic attacks are completely out of the ordinary, mainly involving the creation of unspeakable creepy-crawlies that swarm around Blackheart's opponents.

For X-Men veterans, Blackheart is probably closest to the Sentinel (mainly because they share outstanding basic attacks), but to be honest, he is something of a departure compared to other Capcom titles. It must be said that Blackheart wasn't really to the **MAXIMUM** team's liking, but his weirdness factor alone makes him worth investigation. He's also quite an unpredictable character.



INFINITY GEM: ***REALITY***

Blackheart tends to do a pretty good job warping reality for his own ends, but once he has the Reality gem in his possession, he becomes invisible for a limited time.





MUTANT POWER: ***THUNDER***

The Vector Principle allows Blackheart to aim his Thunder attack in one of three directions depending on which punch button you choose to use.



INFINITY ATTACK #1: ***ARMAGEDDON***

Blackheart's Infinity strike causes a huge barrage of meteors to rain down from the skies, repeatedly hammering his opponent into the ground. It hasn't got that much of a range, but there is no disputing its sheer power.

THE BLACK MAGIC OF BLACKHEART	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
THUNDER	⬇↘➡ + *Any Punch*
THUNDER SLAM	⬇↘➡ + *Any Punch*
INFINITY POWERS	
ARMAGEDDON	⬇↘➡ + *All three Punch buttons*
HEART OF DARKNESS	⬇↘➡ + *All three Kick buttons*

SUPER POWER:
STARS AND STRIPES
Described by some as the Ryu-esque character in Marvel Super Heroes, here's Cap's version of the dragon punch...





CAPTAIN AMERICA

Sentinel of Liberty! Living legend of the USA!

Transformed from wimpy Steve Rogers into Captain America by a special serum designed during World War II, this costumed soldier was instrumental in taking down the Nazi menace in Marvel's version of world events. However, he was frozen in ice for several decades before the Avengers defrosted him.

Although physically, he is in peak-human shape, Captain America has no real super-powers at his command (he's about 20 times *less* powerful than Spider-Man). All he has is his military training and his sheer courage. His only weapon is his shield, made from an adapted form of adamantium, which he throws with an unerring aim. He can control its trajectory thanks to modifications made by Iron Man.

All manner of shield-slinging activities are available to Cap, thanks to the return of the Vector Theory from X-Men, meaning you can choose the direction that the shield is thrown. Although other special moves (indicated) are available to Captain America, it's his potential for combination attacks that makes him so powerful. For example, all of his kicks can be chained together into combos.

Despite his apparent lack of super-powers, Captain America is one of the most easily accessible fighters in the game.







INFINITY GEM: ***POWER***
Wolverine-style shadows appear around Cap, boosting attacks such as the Shield Slash and Stars and Stripes by a factor of three.





SUPER POWER: ***CHARGING STARS***
Cap's super-serum enhanced physique takes him to the limits of human speed – something captured in Marvel Super Heroes in the form of the Charging Stars move.

SUPER POWER: ***SHIELD SLASH***
Captain America's version of the fireball – he throws his shield in three different directions depending on which button has been pressed.





INFINITY ATTACK: ***FINAL JUSTICE***
Any one who witnesses this Infinity Attack should be instantly reminded of a King of Fighters style super-move. A vast amount of close-range punches and kicks are followed by Cap taking his foe into the sky before crashing him into the ground.

THE SUPER POWERS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
SHIELD SLASH	↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
STARS AND STRIPES	→↓↘ + *Any Punch*
CHARGING STARS	←↙↓↘→ + *Any Kick*
INFINITY POWER	
FINAL JUSTICE	↓↘→ + *All three Punch buttons*

RADIOACTIVE POWER:
GAMMA RUSH
Initiated with a Sonic Boom style movement, the Hulk uses his phenomenal strength to drive his way through the opposition.





INCREDIBLE HULK

"Is he man? Is he monster? Or is he... both?"

The Hulk is one of the Marvel characters whose origin is pretty well known. While trying to save an innocent teenager who had wandered into a nuclear test site, Bruce Banner was bombarded with rays from the explosion of a gamma bomb of his own creation. Over the years, the amount of methods used to change from Hulk to Banner has changed significantly. From mental control through time of the day to using special gamma ray machines, the Hulk has changed a lot since his first story in 1961. These days, getting him angry turns him from Hulk to Banner (not the other way around).

One thing that hasn't changed is the fact that without a doubt, the Hulk is the strongest mortal on the face of the Earth. In Marvel Super Heroes, his powers in this regard are without compare and in sheer bludgeoning strength, his only rival is the unstoppable Juggernaut. Favourite moves include ripping up the ground and charging through his enemies.





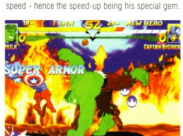


INFINITY GEM: **TIME**
The Hulk is such a rampantly powerful creature that just about the only area where he can improve is in speed - hence the speed-up being his special gem.



RADIOACTIVE POWER: **GAMMA THROW**
Tear the very floor apart then hurl it at your foes. It's a good long range attack. Also, two variants of the move are present.





THE RADIOACTIVE POWERS OF THE HULK	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
GAMMA RUSH	Hold ← then → + any Kick
GAMMA RUSH	Hold ↓ then ↑ + any Kick
GAMMA SWING	→↘↓↙← + Any Punch
GAMMA THROW	←↙↓↘→ + Any Punch
INFINITY POWER	
GAMMA CRUSH	↓↘→ + All three Punch buttons
INFINITY GAMMA THROW	↓↓ + All three Punch buttons



INFINITY ATTACK #1:
GAMMA CRUSH
The Hulk's legs are powerful enough to propel him up to three miles in any given direction! In this Infinity Attack, he zooms straight into the skies, collects an asteroid and returns to terra firma, crushing his opponent. Huge damage ensues - even if the opponent is blocking.

ROBOTIC POWER: **UNI BEAM**
Iron Man's armour is packed with all manner of offensive weaponry, including this powerful multi-hit laser-style weapon.





IRON MAN

He lives! He walks! He conquers!

Tony Stark was forced to become Iron Man. Pressed into creating weapons for an enemy super-power, instead he created the very suit that enabled him to escape. His heart, close to stopping thanks to a bullet wound sustained before his capture, was saved, thanks to special transistorised technology. Over the years, Stark has refined and improved the Iron Man armour, making him the Marvel Super Hero who has changed his appearance the most often (in fact, in recent comics, Stark himself has been replaced by a younger version of himself from the past). The video game reflects the fact that all of Stark's power comes from the suit. In terms of raw strength, he's probably on about the same level as Spider-Man, but he benefits greatly from rocket-boots and special repulsor beams built into the palms of his armour. Other weapons (excluding his frankly unbelievable Infinity Special) include laser beams that enable him to strike from a distance.

Yes, it many ways, it's pretty clear that Iron Man is the equivalent of Cyclops from X-Men: Children of the Atom (even his Super is pretty similar, it must be said). Combination attacks aren't really his speciality and instead he tends to rely on "trick" moves and attacks courtesy of the armour.









INFINITY GEM: **SOUL**
Iron Man's gem promotes an excellent life-recovering field - this has the same effect as on any other character but extra energy is awarded for damage Iron Man inflicts.



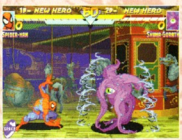
ROBOTIC ATTACK: **REPULSOR BLASTER**
Another armour-spawned attack - although this move has most effectiveness when used against jumping and airborne opponents.



INFINITY ATTACK: **PROTON CANNON**
Iron Man's super attack is yet another technological trick packed into his suit. Looking very similar indeed to Cyclops' optic blast X-Attack from Children of the Atom, this laser beam of pure concussive force inflicts huge amounts of damage.

THE ROBOTIC POWERS OF IRON MAN	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
UNI BEAM	← ↙ ↓ ↘ → + Any Punch
REPULSOR BLASTER	→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ← + Any Punch
SMART BOMB	Same strength Punch & Kick together
FLYING	↓ ↙ ← + All three Kick buttons
INFINITY POWERS	
PROTON CANNON	↓ ↘ → + All three Punch buttons





ARACHNID POWER: ***WEB-BALL***

As well as shooting strands of webbing as strong as piano wire, Spider-Man can also fire off concentrated liquid web-balls, which temporarily imprison his opponents.



SPIDER-MAN

"Marvel at the awesome might of... Spider-Man!"

Out of all the heroes in the Marvel Universe, Spider-Man remains perhaps the most under-rated. This is probably because he isn't the strongest fighter around, and neither is he the cleverest. However, due to the unique nature of his powers combined with his inventiveness, he is in many ways the most effective.

The combination of Spidey's speed and strength is what keeps him alive. His fighting style is totally different to anything you'd have seen before. He knows no specific martial arts, but instead relies on moves based around his dazzling speed and dexterity, as well as warnings from his Spider-Sense.

In the game, Spidey's nimble nature has been perfectly reproduced, and of all the characters, he is best suited to combination moves based around his basic fighting attacks. His webbing is used to either slow down the opposition and throw them about, and it's also useful for web-swinging into his foes or out of harm's way.

Overall, Spider-Man's combination potential has made him the favourite player in Marvel Super Heroes' first month in the arcades.





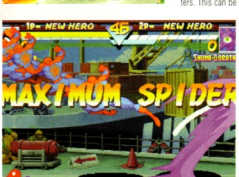
INFINITY GEM:
POWER

Using the Power Infinity Gem causes another Spider-Man to appear on-screen, who mirrors your movements and doubles your attack potential.



ARACHNID POWER: ***WEB-SWING***

Firing off a web, Spider-Man swings across the level horizontally. If the opponent is in the way, a hit registers. This can be strung into a combination.



INFINITY ATTACK:
MAXIMUM SPIDER

Using the full lick of superhuman speed at his disposal, Spidey flies around the screen inflicting multiple hits on his opponents. At the point just before the move is unleashed, you can choose the direction Spidey flies in, which affects the amount of hits he inflicts.



THE ARACHNID POWERS OF SPIDER-MAN	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
WEB-BALL	↓ ↘ → + *Any Punch*
SPIDER-STING	→ ↓ ↘ + *Any Punch*
WEB-SWING	↓ ↙ ← + *Any Kick*
WEB-THROW	→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ← + *Any Kick*
INFINITY POWERS	
MAXIMUM SPIDER	↓ ↘ → + *All three Punch buttons*





WOLVERINE

Canada's feral super hero with unstoppable adamantium rage!

Wolverine was chosen as part of the Infinity Way taskforce, because like the Hulk he has a true killing spirit. Adam Warlock, the mysterious leader of the heroes knows that Wolverine's lack of mercy could well be instrumental in delivering the killing blow to Thanos... should it become necessary. Extremely fast and agile, Wolverine's unbreakable adamantium claws form the basis of many of his special moves.

Players of Wolverine from X-Men: Children of the Atom should be pretty much acquainted with his style of play. His incredible capability to chain moves together like nobody else remains, and a toned down version of his Berserker Barrage X-Attack actually makes an appearance as an "ordinary" special move.

Unlike X-Men, Wolverine's healing factor is constantly active - *as it should be* - giving him back half the energy any hit inflicts. That basically means that Wolverine only takes half-damage.

INFINITY POWER #1: ***BERSERKER BARRAGE X***

This should be extremely familiar to any one who has played X-Men: Children of the Atom. Unleashing his full adamantium rage, Wolverine cuts through his foes like a hot knife through butter.













INFINITY GEM: ***POWER***

This gem gives Wolverine berserker speed, easily spotted by the after-images of him which appear on-screen. This used to be an X-Attack from the X-Men coin-op.

INFINITY POWER #2:
WEAPON X

An all-new attack for the ferocious mutant, this is the closest Wolverine gets to a drag-on punch style super-move (in the style of Ryu or Akuma from Super Street Fighter II Turbo). It dodges under fireball attacks and inflicts masses of damage.



THE BERSERKER POWERS OF WOLVERINE	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
DRILL CLAW	Aim joystick + same Punch & Kick
TORNADO CLAW	➡⬇↘ + Any Punch
BRESERKER BARRAGE	⬇↘➡ + Any Punch
X POWERS	
BERSERKER BARRAGE X	⬇↘➡ + All three Punch buttons
WEAPON X	➡⬇↘ + All three Punch buttons

INFINITY GEM: ***SPACE***

Juggernaut is already pretty well-armoured, but this Infinity Gem causes him to become invulnerable to normal attacks, only taking superficial damage from specials..





JUGGERNAUT

"I need a real work out! Something worthy of my power!"

Trapped in a collapsed ancient temple, Cain Marko seized the magical ruby of Cytorrak, which transformed him into a human juggernaut. Gaining a huge amount of extra muscle and stature, Marko gained superhuman strength second only to the Hulk, along with mystical powers which make him nigh-on impossible to defeat. Part of the enchantment is the Juggernaut's invulnerability. Even nuclear weapons would stand little hope of stopping him in his tracks. However, when Juggernaut hears word of the universal power of the Infinity Gauntlet, he sets out to wrest the gems from Thanos to use for his own limited schemes.

Of course, his powers have all been toned down slightly for the coin-op, otherwise Juggernaut would have a pretty easy time of it up until he meets Thanos. However, his strength can't be underestimated and his Super-X attacks are hugely damaging.

Juggernaut remains pretty much as he was in the X-Men coin-op. However, it was impossible to control him then and Marvel Super Heroes is the first time Juggernaut has ever been playable in a videogame!





X-ATTACK: ***JUGGERNAUT HEADCRUSH***

Again, Juggernaut's super-moves remain very similar to X-Men: Children of the Atom. With the HeadCrush, Juggernaut turns invincible and charges through the opposition.





CYTORRAK POWER:
JUGGERNAUT PUNCH

A slow and ponderous move - but causes absolutely stunning amounts of damage should it hit.



CYTORRAK POWER: ***EARTHQUAKE***

Striking the ground, Juggernaut causes a mini-seismic disturbance, which rips through the ground causing much damage to any one fool enough not to jump over it.

THE UNSTOPPABLE POWERS OF JUGGERNAUT	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
EARTHQUAKE	➡↘⬇ + *Any Punch*
JUGGERNAUT PUNCH	⬅↙⬇↘➡ + *Any Punch*
CYTORRAK POWER-UP	➡⬇↘ + *All three Punch buttons*
INFINITY POWERS	
JUGGERNAUT HEADCRUSH	⬇↘➡ + *All three Punch buttons*

INFINITY GEM: ***SPACE***

This particular super-move blasts through anything - indeed, in X-Men, it could take away half of your energy bar in seconds! Now Magneto is player-controlled, it isn't so powerful, but it's definitely one of the more awe-inspiring attacks.





MAGNETO

"The Infinity Gems will save mutantkind! They must be mine!"

Magneto was undoubtedly the most powerful character in the X-Men: Children of the Atom coin-op, being one of the most rock-hard bosses ever devised (especially in the Saturn conversion). Marvel Super Heroes gives players their first chance to control him, and he returns almost as powerful as he was in the first Capcom/Marvel game.

Magneto realises that he is just one man and that isn't enough to make sure that mutantkind will prevail over ordinary homo sapiens. However, he realises that with the help of Infinity Gems, he will become almost god-like, leaving the entire population of the cosmos at his mercy! This is Capcom's explanation for Magneto's appearance here, as he wasn't in the actual comics series at all.

With only minor changes, Capcom have carried Magneto over almost completely from his first appearance in X-Men: Children of the Atom. With the sheer range of attacks at his disposal, he has to stand a fairly good chance to taking Thanos down.





X-ATTACK #1:
MAGNETIC SHOCKWAVE

This particular super-move blasts through anything - indeed, in X-Men, it could take away half of your energy bar in seconds! Now Magneto is player-controlled, it isn't so powerful, but it's definitely one of the more powerful attacks.





MAGNETIC POWER:
EM DISRUPTOR

A powerful burst of pure electromagnetic energy issues forth from Magneto's fingertips - this can be fired through the magnetic shield, making it invaluable.





X-ATTACK #2:
MAGNETIC TEMPEST

Using his unrivalled powers of magnetic mastery, Magneto summons huge chunks of metal that he uses to destroy all opposition. Again, any one who has played against Maggy in X-Men should be able to prepare for this attack.

THE MAGNETIC POWERS OF MAGNETO	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
EM DISRUPTOR	⬅ ↙ ⬇ ↘ ➡ + *Any Punch*
HYPER GRAVITON	➡ ↘ ⬇ ↙ ⬅ + *Any Kick*
MAGNETIC WAVE	⬆ ↗ ➡ + *Any Punch*
FLYING	⬇ ↙ ⬅ + *All three Kick buttons*
X POWERS	
MAGNETIC SHOCKWAVE	⬇ ↘ ➡ + *All three Punch buttons*
MAGNETIC TEMPEST	⬇ ↘ ➡ + *All three Kick buttons*

DIMENSIONAL POWER: ***MYSTIC BOUNCE***

Having total control of your physical shape does have its advantages. In this attack, Shuma-Gorath turns into a bouncing spiked ball, which can often take the opponent by surprise.



SHUMA-GORATH

Alien being whose entire body is one living weapon!

The Infinity War comic series tend to take established Marvel characters into the galactic territories usually reserved for the likes of Galactus, Quasar and the Silver Surfer. The inclusion of Shuma-Gorath (along with Blackheart) is clearly an attempt to introduce a more other-worldly atmosphere to the game. If you've never heard of him before, it's not surprising, as he is an arch-villain who occasionally crops up in Doctor Strange comics with the intent to conquer all reality.

Shuma-Gorath is an alien being who has near-total control over his physical form. Composed mainly of pink skin and an enormous eye-ball, he can contort his body into any conceivable shape - he can punch or kick with his tentacles or expand a single appendage and pummel his foe with it. Soft or spiky, Shuma-Gorath can adopt any shape he desires, and so like Blackheart, even his basic attacks have a most spectacular feel to them.

His special moves are even more bizarre. He can turn into a spiky ball and bounce around the play-area, or he can unleash spiralling eye-balls of doom, which cause multiple hits on their own and chain extremely well.

Like Blackheart, Shuma-Gorath is a most strange character (his counterpart from X-Men would undoubtedly be Spiral) and although he's unlikely to win any popularity contests, as a fighter he does have a lot going for him.



INFINITY GEM: ***TIME***

Using the Infinity gem doesn't tend to have much effect on its own. However, if Shuma-Gorath hits his foe, they freeze, giving him one free hit on his prey





THE DIMENSIONAL POWERS OF SHUMA-GORATH	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
STARING SHOT	*Hold ⬅ then ➡ + any Punch*
MYSTIC BOUNCE	*Hold ⬅ then ➡ + any Kick*
GORATH GRAB	*➡↘⬇↙⬅ + Any Punch*
INFINITY POWER	
CHAOS DIMENSION	*⬇↘➡ + All three Punch buttons*

INFINITY POWER: ***CHAOS DIMENSION***

Definitely one of the most spectacular in the game. Shuma-Gorath encapsulates his prey in an enormous pink sphere, before rising up into the air and trapping his opponent in a rapidly changing shape that attacks from all sides. Extremely deadly.





PSYLOCKE

Powerful psychic powers and ninja-quick attacks!

Due to her Japanese appearance (even though she's actually English) and ninja-esque martial arts moves, Psylocke proved to be one of the most popular X-Men when the first Capcom/Marvel coin-op appeared in Japan, so it's little surprise to see her returning for Marvel Super Heroes, despite the fact that her appearances in any of the Infinity War sagas have been little more than minor cameos.

Again, any one who has played the X-Men: Children of the Atom coin-op will have little trouble getting to grips with Psylocke, as by and large, she's pretty much identical to her previous appearance. She has a new teleportation special move (which is something she's never been able to do in the comics), but otherwise, she holds no surprises to any one who's played Children of the Atom.

Her strengths lie in speed and combination. Incredibly, she's quicker even than Spider-Man or Captain America, particularly in dashing attacks, and her psychic knife punch moves are excellent in scooping an opponent from the ground into the air, whereupon she can incur huge amounts of damage with air-combination attacks.

NINJA SKILL: ***PSI-FLASH***
The basic psychic fireball manoeuvre forms the backbone of Psylocke's range attacks. Although seemingly slow, it has great combination potential at close range.





NINJA SKILL: ***PSI-BLADE SPIN***
Psylocke's skills lie in the combo arena and the Psi-Blade is an excellent move to add into your multiple strike attacks.









INFINITY GEM: ***POWER***
In an attack similar to an X-Attack from the X-Men game, multiple images of Psylocke appear. All of them can hit the opponent, but only one of them can be hit.

THE NINJA SKILLS OF PSYLOCKE	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
PSI-BLADE SPIN	↓↘→ + *Any Kick*
PSI-FLASH	↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
NINJITSU	→↘↓↙← + *Any button*
X POWER	
PSI-THRUST	↓↘→ + *All three Punch buttons*
STRANGE BUTTERFLY CLOAK	↓↙← + *All three Kick buttons*
PSI-MAELSTROM	↓↘→ + *All three Kick buttons*



X-ATTACK # 1:
PSI-THRUST
As you might imagine, this remains virtually identical to its X-Men appearance. Psylocke is encapsulated by psychic energy which causes heinous amounts of damage when it hits. Like Spidey's super, she can choose its direction upon activation of the move.

NOT

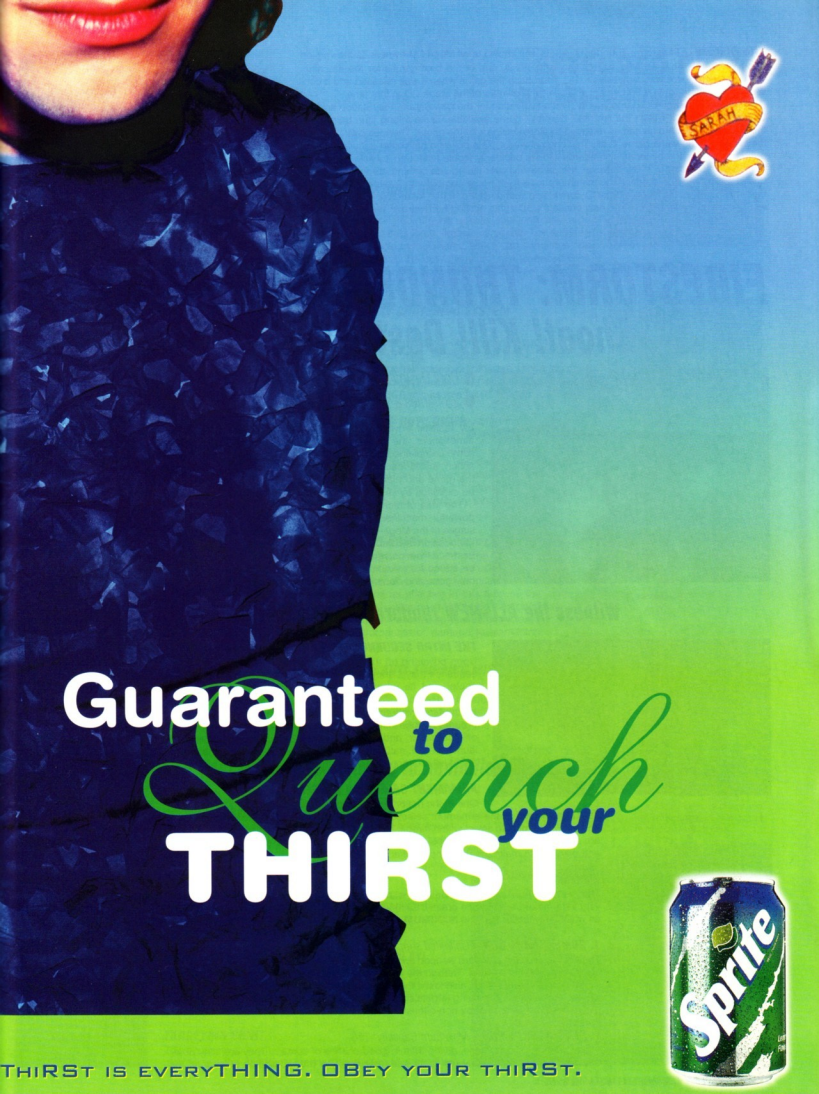
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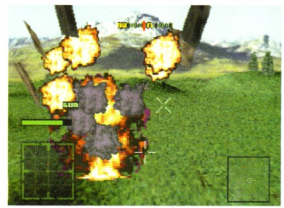
ALISON




SARAH
Guaranteed
to
Quench
your
THIRST
Sprite
THIRST IS EVERYTHING. OBEY YOUR THIRST.

The history of Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 is well known to all Mega-CD owners as the version upon which this new game is based was, and still is, one of the best games for the machine. Unsurprisingly, there was a massive rush to purchase the game when it was released and it consequently was bought by 80 percent of all existing owners of the Mega-CD at that time.

Although this Mega-CD game was the main inspiration for the new Saturn, PlayStation and PC CD-ROM versions it wasn't the first Thunderhawk game available. Quite a long time before this there were PC and Amiga games released by Core Design with the name "Thunderhawk", though they were not the same game at all. This original was a plain polygon helicopter simulation without much action and by today's standards it looks decidedly feeble (although it was a huge hit at the time). In November 1993, however, the game was overhauled and nothing but the helicopter-based action and title survived the metamorphosis from home computer to "state-of-the-art" CD-based console as the Sega Mega-CD conversion was released. It had incredible graphics which were some of the first to use the new console's 3D sprite scaling hardware to create an incredibly realistic environment. As well as fantastic graphics and atmosphere, the game played as well as it looked. Though some complained about the limited and repetitive nature of the action, it had massive appeal as almost anyone could pick up the game and blast away, though the strategy side could only be exploited by serious playing.



FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2

Shoot! Kill! Destroy all enemies!



- *Core Design's debut Saturn product!*
- *25 frames a second death-dealing helicopter mayhem!*

The idea of recreating the incredible game on today's most powerful machines was one of genius. The flat, unrealistic stages of the Mega-CD original could be improved massively by the addition of contours; the blocky sprite-based enemies could be made from polygons and extra views and a 3D cockpit could be added for maximum realism. And you know what? They've only gone and done it too.

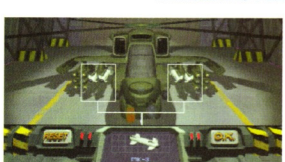








Witness the ALL-NEW rendered introduction sequence!



THE INTRO SEQUENCE

Upon powering up the game, a fantastic rendered introduction sequence plays, showing vector graphics of the Firestorm helicopter and its weapons morphing into fully-detailed texture-mapped models. These then combine, making the complete helicopter which proceeds to smash through the grid background. As it flies along a canyon, it locates two enemy vehicles on the radar and instantly locks onto them. Missiles are launched and, naturally, massive explosions follow. A fine example of full-motion video if ever there was one.

ARMAMENT SELECTION SCREEN

One of the major new features of Thunderhawk 2 over the original Thunderhawk is the armament selection screen. This appears before every mission and allows the pilot to select which three weapons should be taken to the next area. There are three points on the chopper that can be armed and it takes careful consideration and planning to make the right choice of armaments.



The chain gun has a fair degree of range, although its effectiveness is cut short at very long distance targets.

WEAPONS

The AH-73M Thunderhawk can be fitted with a wide selection of powerful weapons which vary in terms of performance greatly. Each weapon has its own strengths and weaknesses which are detailed here in **MAXIMUM** depth.

1. 30mm CHAIN-GUN - *Unlimited supply of ammunition.*

The chain-gun is the standard weapon and can always be relied upon, even when all other ammo has been expended. Though the firing rate is relatively high, the damage caused is very low. The rapid-fire is also lost if the chopper takes too much flak. The chain-gun is almost useless against moving targets so it should be used when there is no other ammunition available, or to destroy non-offensive targets – like buildings and APCs.

2. FFAR ROCKET POD - *Maximum Capacity: 116*

These are fired two at a time, giving them a good chance of contact. They are fairly powerful and have a reasonably fast firing rate, making them a good choice of weapon for

Core Design's graphic artists have done an excellent job in rendering the introduction sequence, frames from which are shown above.

2



ground-based targets. The rockets also move at a good speed, making it near-impossible for potential targets to escape from a good shot.

3. AGM-214 FIRESTORM HOMING MISSILE

- Maximum Capacity: 28

A very valuable weapon, the homing missiles lock onto any large targets and hit with extreme force almost every time. The auto-targeting system takes a split-second to get a lock on the enemy, which can sometimes be slightly too long and the missiles can quite easily be out-run by any fast air-based vehicles. Even though there are problems, it is a wise idea to have at least a few of these missiles on every mission.

3



4. RCS-233 RUNWAY CRATERING SYSTEM

- Maximum Capacity: 4 pods

These are only used on missions which involve stopping enemy aircraft from being launched. A cluster of small bombs are released, making many small craters on runways, rendering them useless. Only four can be carried at once so they must be used wisely, as wasting the RCS results in a failed mission.

5



5. MK-84 500lb "BIG BOY" BOMB - *Maximum Capacity: 8*

The appropriately nicknamed "Big Boy" causes enormous amounts of damage to any ground-based targets within a large damage radius. The bomb also causes damage to the player's helicopter if released when too near to the ground. It therefore must be dropped from a great height, making it difficult to aim accurately. This is best used on primary target buildings and collections of tanks.

6. MK-88 CLUSTER BOMB - *Maximum Capacity: 20*

These are a combination of the MK-84 bomb and the RCS, as they are a collection of small bombs which are used mainly on ground-based enemy vehicles. Can be used on enemy installations but they aren't as effective in this area as the MK-84 bombs which have a much more concentrated damage radius. The MK-88s are spread across a large area, causing fair amounts of damage to everything nearby.

7. MK-3 PENGUIN ANTI-SHIPPING MISSILE

- Maximum Capacity: 8

Best used during the aquatic campaigns in the Panama Canal and the South China Seas as they are designed for use against boats and ships. These missiles cause large amounts of damage and work in almost exactly the same way as the AGM-214 Firestorm Missiles.

4a



4b



The runway annihilating bombs in action! Fairly impressive conflagrations eh?

6



7



Use 21st century technology to annihiliate the enemy!

COCKPIT INSTRUMENTS

When flying the helicopter from the virtual cockpit, pilots will notice that the "dashboard" is full of instrumentation, as well as there being a loads of HUD information.



COMPASS

This resides at the top of the screen and is very useful for keeping your bearings when involved in a fire fight. Primary targets are indicated on the compass as a red bar, making locating the most threatening enemies a lot easier.

RDWD (RADAR DETECTION WARNING DISPLAY)

When the word "LOCK" appears in yellow above the compass, the enemy is tracking your location. When the word changes to red, the enemy has got an exact lock on you and will launch a missile at any time.



TARGETING SIGHT

This shows exactly where your current weapon is aimed and also shows the chopper's bearing as a second cross-hair.

The Virtual Cockpit below is initially very impressive, although soon you'll be switching to the more conventional views.





This is useful when your pilot's head has been turned to one side and it is difficult to tell in which direction you are heading. The sight will also change for each weapon, pointing out any targets and showing exactly how long missiles will take to lock onto an enemy.



WEAPON SELECTION

The currently selected weapon is displayed just above the armour level indicator. The weapons can be switched though at any time and will revert to the Chain Gun when all other ammo has be used.



ARMOUR LEVEL INDICATOR

This coloured bar shows the level of armour integrity. When there is little danger, the bar is green and as it takes damage it goes through yellow to red. When the bar reaches zero, the helicopter crashes to the ground.



RADAR

The panel in the centre of the cockpit shows all short-range threats. Ground-based enemies are shown as red dots, airborne enemies are yellow dots and missiles are white dots.

MAP DISPLAY

The right-hand cockpit panel shows an overhead view of the mission zone and displays all ground objects. All primary targets are shown as coloured dots and the dotted white line indicates the perimeter of the current mission zone. If this line is crossed before all mission objectives are completed, it is classed as aborted.

The sea missions are some of the most taxing in the ThunderHawk campaigns.

MCI (MISSION COMPLETE INDICATOR)

Once all mission objectives have been completed, this visual indicator and the verbal message tell the pilot that it is time to exit the area or return to base, depending on the nature of the current mission.



become slightly confusing in the heat of battle as to which way the chopper is facing.

THIRD PERSON PERSPECTIVE

To get a better idea of the surroundings, this view comes in very useful. The "camera" follows the helicopter from a few feet behind, enabling pilots to see any enemies positioned to the side. This view is also useful for pinpointing the location of enemies because the small explosions showing up on the side of the helicopter indicate from where the shot was fired.



DIFFERENT VIEWS

With a simple press of a button the viewing angle can be changed to one of three fantastic 3D viewpoints.

FULL-SCREEN

With this view, the virtual "camera" is in the tip of the nose of the helicopter, providing a full-screen view of the action. Almost all of the HUD apparatus is shown, meaning that no information is lost. The main disadvantage is that once the pilot's head has been turned to either side it can

VIRTUAL COCKPIT

The virtual cockpit looks fantastic as it is all created in full 3D. The instruments can be read easily and, though the cockpit obscures the pilot's view slightly, it is a very impressive view to use. There are buttons which can be used to turn the pilot's head to either side, enabling him/her to see 180 degrees of the cockpit. When these buttons are used in conjunction with the third person perspective view, for example, the virtual "camera" pans around the helicopter.



ThunderHawk 2's 25 frames a second action is very smooth and most exciting indeed. Blast! Kill!









ThunderHawk 2 offers a fair degree of variety in its missions - check out the night-time escapades (left).











Come in from above to avoid the flak, use some heavy duty weaponry and get the hell out of there!



Primary targets are often well-defended. Choose a surgical strike strategy - get in quick, fire accurately and then escape very quickly indeed.

CAMPAIGNS

There are eight campaigns in Thunderhawk 2 which must all be completed to finish the game properly. Each campaign consists of three or four set missions which are tackled in order, though the campaigns can be taken on as you desire. Before each mission there is a briefing where you are told exactly what to do by your superior and you are shown a strategic map showing all primary targets. When selecting which campaign to fly, you are given a brief run-down of what to expect.

1. SOUTH AMERICA - *ARMS RUNNING (4 Missions)*

"Intelligence reports indicate that the Colombian drugs cartels are smuggling in vast quantities of arms at an airstrip in Northern Columbia. From a forward command base just over the border in Venezuela, you must co-ordinate your attacks on the arms smuggling operation." This campaign features fairly simple wooded landscapes with a selection of buildings and air bases to destroy. On each mission there are radar masts which must be destroyed before attacking the primary targets to keep the enemy choppers and planes grounded. Use the RCS to make the runways impossible to use, then take out the potentially dangerous enemies while they are unaware of your presence.

2. SOUTH AMERICA - *STEALTH DOWN (3 Missions)*

"When terrorists of the Red Commando movement took hostage three diplomats from the United States embassy in the Peruvian capital of Lima, a stealth plane was dispatched to pinpoint their whereabouts. This plane was subsequently shot down somewhere over the Cordillera mountain range in Eastern Peru. The American hostages have been released, but the stealth pilot is still alive and on the run in Red Commando territory. You must go in there and get him out."

These missions are undertaken at night for extra cover. Once the crashed stealth has been located, it is a battle to rescue the pilot and stop the convoys of enemy trucks from getting away with the top secret materials from the stealth. The trucks that escape are later found loading the stolen items onto a train, which must also be destroyed.

3. PANAMA CANAL - *CANAL CRISIS (3 missions)*

"The democratically elected government has been brutally overthrown by a military junta under the command of General Hernando Dorada. Since then, the Panama Canal – the main shipping lane between the Pacific and the Caribbean – has been under blockade. Your mission is to break the blockade and free the shipping lane."

These missions involve wiping out loads of enemy boats and ground-based missile launchers which are threatening the friendly shipping and NATO boats, as well as your helicopter. The defence missions can cause problems as the attacking forces often hide behind hills and launch long-range missiles at the friendly troops.





4. CENTRAL AMERICA

- RECAPTURE TOWN (3 missions)

"The Panamanian dictator, General Hernando Dorada, has attacked the neighbouring country of Costa Rica. His troops have established a bridgehead in the town of San Lorenzo, just over the border. Your job is to assist Costa Rican troops in recapturing the town."

This campaign is where rookie pilots get to know tanks well as they are the main part of the invasion force. The enemy has also got some large installations with missile launchers outside of the villages adding to the attack. The



Watch your height or valuable armour will be lost on collisions with trees - so stay at a pretty reasonable height.

Take to the skies and fill the air with lead!







This sequence reveals that some of the polygon pop-up in the game is, to put it bluntly, quite atrocious.

settlements must be saved without causing damage to the friendly buildings so careful shooting is required.

5. EASTERN EUROPE - *ESCORT CONVOY (3 missions)*

"Serbian forces have been besieging the town of Zavnik in the former Yugoslavia for the past three moths. The people of Zavnik are starving and aid convoys are unable to get through to them. You're going to be escorting an 'Aid Without Frontiers' convoy into the town and the only way you can do this is by breaking the siege."

The escort missions involve protecting the convoy of friendly trucks from the enemy which is often discovered hiding behind the hills using long-range weaponry. There are other missions involving the bombing of a bridge across the river.

6. MIDDLE EAST - *RECAPTURE TERRITORY (3 missions)*

"Tension in the middle East between Iraq and her neighbour, Jordan, reaches a flashpoint when Iraqi troops cross the border, heading for the Jordanian capital, Amman. Your primary objective is to assist the Jordanian army in repelling the invasion force."

This campaign takes place along a steep canyon with missile sites often positioned part-way up the sides. These cause large problems as you try to take out the invading ground forces and defend the rather inept Jordanian army at the same time.

7. MIDDLE EAST - *OIL DISPUTE (4 missions)*

"History repeats itself when Iraq invades Kuwait. NATO is planning an immediate response with the landing of a task force of British and American marines on Kuwait's gulf coast. Before this can happen, you must assist them by clearing the beach-head of enemy forces."

As is mentioned in the briefing, this campaign begins with you wiping out a large fleet of Iraqi ships as they near the small islands just off the coast. Once this has been successfully completed, the attack moves inland to save Kuwait.

8. SOUTH CHINA SEAS - *PIRACY (3 missions)*

"The South China Sea has been plagued by pirated for many years. Hiding out on the hundreds of tiny islands comprising the Phillippines archipelago, they are consequently very difficult to track down. One particular band of pirates, known as the 'Black Skull Gang' has been attacking passenger ships travelling from Malaysia to the Phillippene capital, Manila. In the past three months they have attacked no less than twenty-four ships and murdered fifteen people. It's your job to put a stop to their murderous exploits."

This campaign's missions are all spent over the water, with only very small islands and man-made supports for missile launchers breaking up the scenery. The missions involve saving threatened shipping, like the massive and very impressive cruise liner, as well as wiping out the various enemy installations on the islands.



Taking out land-based targets is the primary aim of the majority of the missions in Firestorm.





The battleships often carry a full complement of on-board cannons and anti-aircraft weaponry, making them extremely formidable adversaries.

Devising strategies to destroy these dreadnoughts with the minimum loss of armour is a top priority.





A full range of military hardware is up against you! Good Luck!

The range of enemies in Firestorm is quite impressive. The guide to the right reveals the kind of enemy hardware you are up against in the game.



All of the objects in Thunderhawk 2 have been built in full 3D, meaning that there is no pixelisation when close to enemies and scenery, unlike the sprite-based Mega-CD version. Not much time can be spent admiring the fantastic looking foes as they're all out to send you crashing to the ground. See what you're up against in this brief list.

1. JEEP

These mainly stick to the roads and tracks and are really just part of the enemy convoys. They are unarmed but are usual-



ly protected by tanks, though they hardly take any effort at all to be reduced to a smouldering heap of charcoal.

2a



2b



Helicopters are one of the first examples of enemy hardware. Choose missiles at long range and fire! Luckily their intelligence isn't that impressive.

2. CHOPPERS

The round-fronted choppers have got great manoeuvrability and are fairly quick, making them hard targets to destroy. Though their machine guns don't do much damage in the short-term, constant pounding can force a mission abortion. Attempt to take these out before launch, otherwise use missiles when close as long-range shots are often out-run.

3. AEROPLANES

These jets take a long time to be launched but are particularly frustrating once they get in the air. They attack with fly-by motions and shoot their rapid firing guns all the way. To stop them, hover and rotate on the spot so that the 'plane is flying straight toward you – then launch a missile when in range. Watch them crash to the ground in front of you as plumes of smoke rise and merge into the leaden skies.

4. HELICOPTERS

These helicopters are similar to your very own Thunderhawk and attack in a similar fashion to the rounded choppers. They are slightly faster but not quite as agile in the air. Use similar techniques to those used to dispatch the planes (ie. hovering).

5. TANKS

Quite a common enemy on the land-based missions, the tanks move very slowly but keep an almost constant lock on the player. Though the actual vehicle itself is not notably mobile, the gun turret on top is surprisingly quick to keep pointed at the Thunderhawk.

6. SAMs

The surface-to-air missile sites are most common on the China Sea missions as they defend the many enemy installations on the tiny islands. Once the "lock" warning is given, drastic action has to be taken to avoid taking severe damage from the missiles. Hunt down the SAMs (usually positioned near primary targets) and remove them as soon as possible.

7. APCs

The armoured personnel carriers are most commonly found in convoys with tanks as protection. They don't actually cause too many problems on their own but do require larger amounts of ammo to destroy than trucks or jeeps. Don't worry about them too much unless they are primary targets.

7



8. BATTLESHIPS

These moderately-sized battleships have got massive armour ratings and a large array of deadly weaponry. Aim for the guns at the front and rear of the ship for maximum effect. Thankfully, there aren't too many of these around at once, except in some piracy missions where gangs of them are attacking cruise ships.

8



GRAPHICS NOTES

The newly-3D graphics in Thunderhawk 2 are very cleverly done. To avoid the problem of there being no detail in the far distance, where the 3D scenery hasn't yet been built, the floor of the levels has been made of one enormous sprite, like the Mega-CD Thunderhawk game. This is then rotated about in a way similar to the Super NES's "mode 7" and the hills are built on top of it. This gives the impression of the 3D detail running off into the far distance, whereas in reality this would probably cause the game to slow down slightly from its amazing 25 frames per. second.

3



5



Air-to-air combat is often a close-range affair - something that your ThunderHawk gunship isn't that well equipped for. Selct the cannons and fire!

STRATEGIES

Though the game is described as a "3D arcade helicopter shoot-'em-up", there is quite a lot of strategy involved in playing well. These are some of the more simple techniques as favoured by the **MAXIMUM** team.

AVOIDING RADAR

To "creep up" on enemy installations, simply fly as low to the ground as possible as this makes it very difficult for the enemy radar to pick you up. Use your own radar and heading indicator to find your targets rather than flying up high. By keeping low you can reach runways and helipads before the enemy has been scrambled, enabling you to save precious ammo and armour as you take them out quickly while they are "sitting ducks".

TAKE OUT THE RADAR FIRST

By looking closely at your mission briefing, you can memorise the locations of enemy radar points. These should be destroyed first as they will alert the entire enemy force to you position, making your job a lot harder. The first enemies to benefit from the alerted radar sites are the helicopters, which are instantly dispatched to your current location.

THE FLY-BY

The most popular technique in air-based strategy war games is the fly-by. This is where the pilot simply flies toward the ground-based enemy, firing as he/she goes. Once the helicopter has passed over the enemy, it should be turned around and the process should be repeated. This is particularly useful against the slow tanks as they cannot turn around quickly enough to follow a good pilot.

EMERGENCY!

If the helicopter's armour level gets particularly low and there is no way that the mission objectives can be completed, attempt to exit the mission zone. Though the mission will be failed, your helicopter will be saved.

DOOM - Destroy your mates in awesome terror-filled combat zones!

PLAYSTATION DOOM - LINK-UP FOR THE ULTIMATE GORE-A-THON!







PlayStation Doom has arrived and is currently wowing gamers across the globe with just the right blend of insane massacre and genuinely terrifying levels, and following our Extended Play last issue, **MAXIMUM** brings you the second portion of our Doom coverage. Not content with delivering arguably the finest 3D blastathon yet seen on any console, Williams entertainment have added a further touch of class - the fantastic multi-player link-up system. This adds substantially to the longevity and playability of an already first-rate title and offers a further two options; Cooperative or Deathmatch Doom. You are well advised to find an opponent with a lust for blood before darkening the lights, zipping up your combat fatigues, locking, loading and entering the new and unleashed horror of multi-player Doom!

THE DEMONS ARE HERE!

The lights are pulsating. You dive for cover as another disfigured trooper shambles into view. You're low on ammo, health and armour and there are imps everywhere. You click in your final Shotgun clip and take a deep breath. A growling undead sergeant takes both barrels to the guts and flies backwards, hitting the deck in a shower of blood. You reach for your last rocket as inhuman shrieking fills your ears. The situation is looking grim, soldier!

Suddenly, a radio transmission clicks in through the radio static. "Green leader, green leader, green two here to assist!" A massive explosion rocks the corridor as a dozen imps explode in a massive explosion of blue plasma. Shaking off the gore and plucking out the shrapnel, you almost launch your missile at a darting figure before realising the back-up you requested is finally here!



"Thank God you're here, marine."

"Only too happy to oblige, sergeant!"

"What's your name, son?"

"Guise, sir. Tom Guise. Fresh out of the academy, and here to kick some Demon butt to hell and back again!"

"Ah, I see..."

Take on terror in COOPERATIVE mode!!

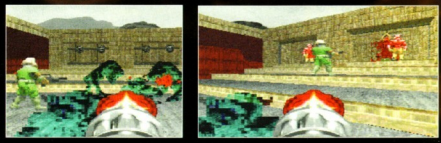
DEATHMATCH TACTICS #1
LISTENING

Taking the example of level 31 (although all tactics are relevant to all arenas), a regular Deathmatch Doomster can instinctively know where his opponent is by listening to movements. The lift whirring can mean an attempt to jump onto the Plasma Gun, whilst a triple reload sound followed by a grunt indicates the foe is in the initial two-pillared chamber. Another cunning plan is to use these sounds to confuse a semi-experienced player; by running down the steps outside (to the single-barrelled shotgun) and making the same grunting sound, then running back to the beginning of the level and gunning down a puzzled player with great delight. With practice, Deathmatch Doom becomes almost reliant on listening to your enemy's progress and reacting suitably.

COOPERATE OR DIE!

The first of the two double player blast fests places two marines in a monster-filled Doom environment of your choosing. The plan is exactly the same as the one-player mode - kill everything in sight that isn't green, humanoid and wearing a helmet! This is the only way to plough through the massive number of levels available, and all the methods of play learnt from previous expeditions should be utilised again. However, there are some extra tactics you may wish to employ to make your double quest all the more entertaining.

There is no room for greed on cooperative mode, and all the objects scattered throughout the levels should be fairly shared to extend your expedition. Good verbal communication is also important, and you should constantly talk to your partner, telling him of your position and possible demonic incursions. Resist the temptation to split up, unless you are completely sure of the level layout, as bumping into one another in a darkened corridor usually results in the filing of pantaloons followed by a rapid exchange of gunfire. With these tips in mind, you may now attempt to complete the fifty-four levels of PlayStation Doom with a companion. Prepare for a greater challenge and yet more terror!



The main picture (above) shows how cooperative mode should be played. Remember to fire at the dark denizens of Hell when in cooperative mode, and not your team mate (left).

Just when you thought that Doom couldn't get any more tense, along comes the Deathmatch mode to squeeze the final drop of gameplay from this title. Now your mission is to confront a carbon copy of yourself, and once found, it must be terminated with extreme prejudice. This link-up feature is by far the most fun you can have, as now the enemy is another human player who is out for your blood! You may notice that the weapon selection has been replaced by the 'fragometer', indicated the number of kills you have achieved. Kill you foe, and the fragometer increases by one, but kill yourself, and one frag is deducted. This can lead to minus frags for incompetent players, so watch your step!

When engaging the enemy for the first bout of bloodletting, there are some basic strategies to try. Remember to side-step expertly; as rockets can be avoided this way, and the PlayStation shoulder buttons make side-stepping all the more simple. Another basic plan is to run for items whilst looking around you for the enemy. With practice you can back-step onto some shotgun ammo whilst strafing the opponent at the same time. To help you practice these and other Deathmatch skills, **MAXIMUM** has exhaustively playtested the double Deathmatch mode, and has found five awesome levels worthy of your attention. These are explored in detail, as are some handy hints dotted throughout this Extended Play.



DEATHMATCH TACTICS #2
GREED

There's nothing like acquiring a full range of devastating weaponry before hunting down a hapless foe and destroying them in a spray of greasy innards! To make sure you have overwhelmingly superior firepower at all times, you must grab every single piece of hardware you can from the entire level. Once this has been achieved, return to the spot where you last collected your heaviest weapon and grab it again when it reappears. This is sure to infuriate a short-tempered player, but this is war, and it doesn't have to be fair! An example of greed is the Rocket Launcher located in the green radiation pit on level one. With this under your belt (and the enemy only armed with a shotgun), you should collect all the ammo you can, before returning to claim the Launcher again (and again). Now you are free to utterly humiliate your foe!

Frag your friends in DEATHMATCH mode!!



With a glint in their eyes, Richard and Gary both agreed to a mass fragathon in the name of the mag. For close combat, the shotgun is an ideal weapon (picture 1), whilst the more insane player can opt for some close missile action (picture 2). Finally, Richard runs out of Rockets and dives through the secret passageway to stock up (picture 3).

DEATHMATCH ARENA 1: HANGAR

Level one is the ideal introduction to the world of 'fragging'. This has much to offer the Deathmatch virgin, and has many vantage points and windows to shoot through. Three weapons are on offer here - the shotgun, chain-gun and rocket launcher - and the two sets of armour are also a must.





This is an excellent place to stand when you've just fragged your opponent and he starts back at the beginning of the level (picture 4). With only a pistol for defence, he doesn't stand a chance!

The outdoor arena is where most of the carnage should take place on this level (sequence left). Firstly, both characters madly rush for the powerful Rocket Launcher (picture 5), but unfortunately for Richard, Gary got there first (picture 6). Unperturbed, Richard hides behind a distant window and unleashes hot fury (picture 7) until he runs out of Rockets and switches to the trusty shotgun to blast away at the distant Gary (picture 8).

The ultra secret portion of the level is relatively simple to enter, unless you encounter a Gary Hamtyd Rocket Launcher ambush (picture 9). Stark terror reigns as both players run for the secret vantage point (picture 10). Out of ammunition, Richard leaps for freedom and heads for a shotgun confrontation (picture 11).









The BFG pick-up point is an excellent vantage point to fire from (picture 1). From there, you may leap onto the wooden platform to follow up your assault (picture 2) until you run out of BFG ammo, in which case you should follow up with some Plasma strafing (picture 3). Remember that the invincibility sphere is up for grabs in this area.









Try to find the red door as this leads to the awesome BFG, but beware of a Leadbetter ambush (picture 4)! Once in the BFG room, don't attempt to run through the teleport as the level ends (picture 5). A better plan is to secure the Rocket Launcher and wait for your opponent to teleport in (picture 6). Take note that the Radiation suit protects against harmful lava floors, and not the manic Rocket firing that Richard is famous for (pictures 7 & 8).

DEATHMATCH ARENA 2: SEVER THE WICKED

Level 26 is an ultimate Doom arena that also serves as a fine multi-player level. With a large open courtyard, a full compliment of fine armaments and some dark and atmospheric corridors, this is a large level that never gets too massive, and makes the hunt for the enemy all the more tense.



Play DEATHMATCH and turn foes inside out!!

DEATHMATCH ARENA 3: ENTRYWAY

Level 31 is the first of Doom 2's many arenas, and the compact size and sheer number of weapons make for an excellent Deathmatch contest. Once the secret areas have been triggered, some highly desirable objects may be uncovered. You can really rack up the kills in this level, and you're always never far away from an enraged and stalking enemy!









As luck would have it, Gary starts the level in a most advantageous position (picture 1). Later in the level, Richard feels the full force of a Plasma blast and crumples under the hail of fire (picture 2). Richard restarts the level and heads for the plasma lift, but takes a blast to the neck for his troubles by a blood-crazed Gary (picture 3). After much cursing, Richard acquires a Rocket Launcher - it's pay-back time time, Harrod (picture 4)!

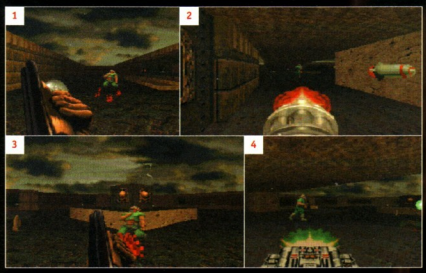
DEATHMATCH TACTICS #3 TELEPORT KNOWLEDGE

There's nothing more satisfying than killing your opponent and watching him reappear within range of your Plasma weapon. Armed with nothing more than the pistol, he stands no chance against your vast armaments, and you can kill him instantly while he mumbles quietly about the unfairness of the game. In level 31, the blue corridor adjacent to the brown arena (with the Plasma Gun) has two starting points near to each other, and from the junction near to the blue health bottles, you can kill your foe in the corridor and wait for him teleport back in. With a little luck, he should materialise in one of the two spots and death may then be dealt. Then wait just in case he appears again, and repeat this extremely unfair method until he appears somewhere else.





For more blood-splattering death than you can possibly handle, fire rockets next to the player (not at him), and watch that exploding gore! Also note the Richard corpses that litter the floor (picture 5). Richard then demonstrates how to teleport in to the same spot three times in a row, before receiving monster portions from the gun-crazed Gary (picture 6).



DEATHMATCH ARENA 4: *DEAD SIMPLE*

As the name suggests, level 37 is a simple affair, but a marvellous arena with numerous weapons to pick up. Of particular note are the two Megaspheres on offer. Bag both of them to avoid being toasted by the enemy. Also remember the berserk pack for even more energy - your punching when enraged can deal over 100 points of damage! Overall, an excessively entertaining level.



As this level is very straightforward (hence the title), this leaves you more time for constant rapid-firing action. Collect the megasphere for awesome amounts of health (picture 1), and then you can take two rockets without flinching (picture 2)! A final excellent power-up is the berserker health that empowers you with supernatural frenzied strength, leading to more gore than ever before (picture 5).



Mash your mates mush with missiles!!

DEATHMATCH ARENA 5: *TRICKS AND TRAPS*

Our final Deathmatch level (number 38) is an expanse of chambers joined to a central hexagonal room. Forget the teleports and the red door, and you can have excellent fun blasting at enemies to smithereens as they desperately try to collect the more powerful guns. Try for the invincibility orbs (there are two) for a particularly unfair confrontation.



Richard demonstrates how to die in screaming agony from a rapid rocket attack (pictures 1 & 2). Another Harrod ambush as Richard teleports in after collecting the weedy shotgun (picture 3). Find the two Megaspheres and you can't lose (picture 4)! More strafing action with both contestants obtaining the Plasma rifle from this area (picture 5). Finally, Gary shows how to find the hidden BFG in the area behind the Rocket Launcher (picture 6).



DEATHMATCH TACTICS #4
GUNNING THE WOUNDED

In the heat of a fierce Deathmatch battle, fatalities come extremely quickly and regularly. After a particularly close combat that results in your own death, you must quickly secure some heavy ordinance and hunt down the wounded enemy before they gain enough health to become a major threat. Sometimes it also pays to run after a wounded foe firing a pistol at him before he has chance to heal himself. This method of execution should cause much embarrassment to a previously cocky player, and also allows you a little time to collect more powerful weapons. With full health and a favourable starting position (next to a weapon and near to your foe), you can take down the opposition with haste, and thus negate the frag you just gave away.

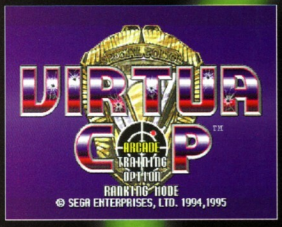


This is the room where most of your confrontations will take place, as you should guard the Rocket Launcher pick-up point with your life (picture 7). Behind the Rocket launcher is the secret area where the mighty BFG can be found (picture 8) as well as a handy amount of health. Watch for frenzied ambushes in this area (picture 9)!

VIRTUA COP - Hyper-realistic gun fighting action blasts onto the Saturn!!

ANOTHER IMPRESSIVE COIN-OP CONVERSION FROM SEGA!

- *The first of the Sega classic coin-ops arrives for the Saturn and it's incredible!*
- *Two players can join forces and take out the bad guys with easy to operate gun action!*



The second wave of Saturn software is continuing with a vengeance, and spearheading this deluge of top-quality software is Virtua Cop. This target-shooting game is the first of the 'big three' major in-house titles to arrive in this country courtesy of the fabled AM2 development team supervised by Yu Suzuki, and **MAXIMUM** is pleased to report that the wait has been worth it: AM2 have most definitely delivered the goods. The PAL version is fully optimised and runs at full speed with no borders, and offers (as you would expect) even more options and secrets to prolong the life of the game. AM2 must be highly commended for creating a first rate shooter that even knocks its arcade counterpart into touch.

"RAGE AND SMARTY REPORTING FOR DUTY, CHIEF!!"

Players take the role of a grizzled no-nonsense Virtua-police officer skilled in tactical use of firearms. There are two officers available for this particular mission, and both are ready to take down the EVL organisation by whatever means necessary. The two uniformed heroes have been partners on many previous cases, and despite some unorthodox approaches to criminal arrest, they have been a considerable credit to the Virtua-police force. Take control of either Michael Hardy (aka 'Rage'); a marksman and ace driver, or James Cools (aka 'Smarty'); a technical expert with gun training to match.





"GIVE IT UP KONG, WE'RE TAKING YOU IN!"

The Saturn version of Virtua Cop features two different introductions; the usual arcade one (with extra lecture-mapping) and an all-new rendered affair. The first part of this shows Rage, Smarty and Kong (the first stage boss) strutting their stuff in various heroic poses, but the second part is far more entertaining. Rage and Smarty drive at breakneck speed around the docks in their police rapid response vehicle (sports model), dodging metal containers and performing flashy stunts. After driving through a wooden storage box (which showers the area with special Japanese Virtua Cop Saturn boxes), they exit

ORIGINAL AND ALL-NEW RENDERED INTROS!!

The two awesome introductions set the scene perfectly for the carnage to come! The main action intro shot shows Rage (left) and Smarty (right) about to dispense the lethal type of justice they favour.

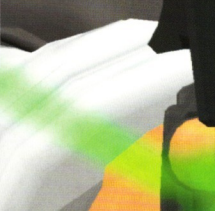












the car, and come face-to-face with the muscular gorilla and EVL arms dealer, Kong.

Kong descends on a crate from the skies, and produces a rocket launcher. Evidently out of rockets, Kong discards this and reaches for the sky. As Rage and Smarty relax their aim, Kong swiftly reaches for a concealed pistol, and fires at the pair. The shot passes over their heads, and the two officers react with speed, drilling the unfortunate (and now definitely disarmed) Kong with gunfire. Satisfied that the area is secure, the pair return to base.









CG intro sets the scene! Go for it, copper!

SEGA SATURN

Tailor your game with comprehensive Saturn-only features!

In the spirit of the earlier AM2 releases, Virtua Cop includes a large number of options and a number of secrets (such as new modes of play) that **MAXIMUM** is proud to reveal, all designed to extend the game's lifespan and provide extra shooting action for your money.

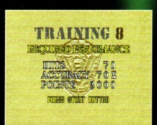




1. JOYPADS OR LIGHT-GUNS: YOUR CHOICE FOR A RAPID EXECUTION!

Virtua Cop can be played using either the joypad or the light gun (a cool black handgun for the Japanese, and a blue children's phazer for Europe). When employing the joypad, a small blue (or pink) cursor appears to show your target destination, but in the heat of the action with multiple enemies appearing, the cursor can sometimes be obscured, leading to an annoying loss of energy. Compare this to the light gun; the only way to play Virtua Cop. After a brief gun alignment you are ready to begin, and although quite weighty, these plastic pistols offer fantastic accuracy and no on-screen cursor; an awesome gaming experience. For utterly over-the-top action, you can even employ the unofficial 'John Woo' option of plugging two guns in and using them both at once! Whatever your choice of control, you can be sure of the finest scrolling shooting action ever seen in a video game.





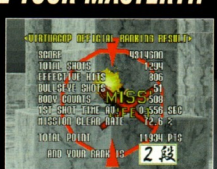
2. HOME ON THE RANGE

Honing your gun skills prior to your mission at the Virtua City Police firing range is vitally important. This is particularly useful for getting to grips with your light gun, and two players may also face off against each other. The one-player game has more to offer though, and pits you (Rage) against different opponents over a number of target shooting scenarios. Kong, King and your alter-ego all challenge your aiming ability before a final showdown with your partner, Smarty!

SELECT RANKING MODE AND PROVE YOUR MASTERY!!







3. RANKING MODE FOR TRUE COMBAT SPECIALISTS!

Complete all three levels of the game, and you are treated to an excellent ending, and the chance to complete the game again in Ranking mode. This works in the same way as Arcade mode, except that you only take five hits before keeling over. This requires a true expert level of gaming skill, and once your lives are lost, you are given a combat performance rating (in the same manner as Virtua Fighter's ranking mode).

4. TOUGHEN UP YOUR ENEMIES

Virtua Cop features nine difficulty settings, and these effect the aim of the baddies, and the speed of the game. Set this to 'Hardest' difficulty settings, and the game runs at the same speed as the arcade version with deadly enemies and no margin for error.

5. "WHAT IS THIS PLACE? IT LOOKS KINDA MIRRORED..."

The Saturn version of Virtua Cop features a special Mirror mode enabling you to gun your way through a mirror-image of the original three levels. This is an excellent addition to the game and essentially provides three extra walkthroughs of familiar shoot-outs that are sufficiently different to warrant the extra interest. To switch the mirror mode on, you must bring up the options screen and highlight the three arrows next to the word 'exit'. Once highlighted, select the arrows and a secret options screen appears (but only if you've already completed the game in arcade mode).





The secret options screen is available via a simple button press (right), and from this screen, the fabulous mirror-mode may be selected (far right).

EXTENDED PLAY







The Mirror mode in full swing! Playing this is initially confusing, with the enemy troopers diving from bewildering angles. Once you've learned the patterns though, the mass carnage continues to occur!





BEGINNER STAGE 1: ARMS BLACK MARKET

You receive a call from Police Chief Hambleton requesting a rapid response to a serious development. Police informers have leaked a message that a major arms transaction is occurring down at the docks, and you are needed to storm the area and stop that deal in your usual over-the-top style. Chief Hambleton warns you that the infamous underworld mercenary, Kong, has been sighted and is overseeing the proceedings.

Scene 1: The main gates!

Rage and Smarty arrive at the Wharf gates primed for some expert sharpshooting action. Snuggling into their bullet-proof vests and combat pantaloons, they ready themselves for the blast fest that is to come. This initial section of the level serves as a gentle introduction to the Virtua Cop gaming environment; with the EVL troopers (mainly consisting of black suited types) popping up adjacent to each other and spending ages aiming at you. This is the perfect opportunity to train your personal gun-aiming skills while the EVL heavies stroll into view and wait for your bullets to hit. The only real surprise is the EVL employee hidden in the perimeter guardhouse, and the easiest way to take him down is to shoot the glass out and aim for the right window just before he appears.





Just before entering the main gates, gun down all the EVL troopers descending from the smugglers' truck. The bomber-jacketed leader is easy to shoot; the main problems come from troopers on the tops of crates and cranes that take time to home in on. When panning from left to right, pump shots into the red petrol barrels in the foreground - this takes out two hapless troopers in a spectacular fashion!





After the action has moved to the right of the crate-storing quayside, you'll find that more hostages pop up to confuse you; either in the foreground or on top of the large grey building. Watch for the crate on the right of your path - keep shooting at it for a rifle (remember that you can't reload it!), and an automatic is on offer if there's two of you playing.

Scene 2: Out in the open!

The maze of crates have been cleansed of EVL scum. Rage and Smarty look at each other with a smile on their faces. "Let's do it!" they cry, and take up defensive positions behind a pile of dead bodies. The second scene is a little trickier, as your accuracy must be excellent in order to execute the remainder of the dock guards. First up is some rooftop hi-jinks with innocent workers and slow gunmen; followed by a spot of sharpshooting at grunts located behind wooden crates. With these taken out, the level's boss, Kong, decides it's time for a tactical retreat and bursts out of the warehouse on a truck cab (and can't be shot).







Realising their exposed position, Rage and Smarty decide to blow everything apart, and this should work well for you too. Panning left, destroy the barrels and the suited types get blown away by the shockwave. Next, keep alert for a number of other EVL chaps popping up from the ship, and there's another barrel to explode. After the shoreline deaths, a baddie falls onto a crate, revealing an automatic. Keep cool outside the warehouse entrance, gunning any bloke that isn't wearing white (and the car windows).



Scene 3: The warehouse!

The warehouse doors open revealing a whole army of black suits ready for your arrival. These chaps aim with some degree of accuracy, so be quick or be dead. After the first wave of fodder, gun the untargetted bloke on the steel balcony, and he'll drop a shotgun that can deal some pretty nasty virtual death. Odd angles and quick changing camera panning means a confusing room that takes time to master. Go to it, mister.



Our advice is to fire quickly and accurately; don't go crazy and gun everything down as there are civilians that need rescuing. If you lose your shotgun, there's another point where a similar untargetted chap runs from right to left - and he drops an automatic. The action gets much more frantic here, as the brainwashed bad guys try everything under the sun to take you out - short of becoming competent. Note the tuxedoed gentlemen falling from the cardboard crate (left); they appear quickly so you need to know where you're shooting to avoid a wounding.

The brainwashed bad guys are at their most dangerous when they appear one behind another (below). This causes problems as one virtually dead trooper winks out of existence and obscures his mate.

Note that hiding behind a 'Friend Electronics' box doesn't protect you from the law (above). Also remember the rules about Justice Shots and Bullseyes. As you can see, our slick-haired gentleman has been shot rather mercilessly in the leg, and this incurs you no bonus points. Much better is to shoot virtual baddies in the head or torso (a good shot results in a 'Bullseye' message), or if you're feeling generous, why not disarm them with supremely accurate firing; thus earning a 'Justice Shot' message.



STAGE 1 BEGINNER BOSS KONG

"PRETTY BOLD AREN'T WE? I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU MYSELF!!"

Kong is a slow buffoon with a high endurance, and is quite easy to defeat. Keep firing away at his torso, and shoot any of the rockets that he fires before they connect and damage you. After about 50 shots, Kong drops his Rocket Launcher and pretends to give himself up, but keep your gun trained on the bounder - he'll reach for a concealed pistol at the first opportunity! Quick reactions at this point are needed to dispatch Kong before he has chance to fire; after which he topples off the lorry to his death. Your jubilation is short-lived however, as you realise Kong was placed only to stall you whilst the main villains escape in a bullet-proof helicopter. Track that helicopter to the next plan of operations.





Kong's missile launcher fires off double the number of rockets in two-player mode (right), but this still doesn't make him much more difficult to take down.

Single players need not worry about facing this ape-like master of smuggling operations. Assuming you have your 'piece' (and haven't traded it in for an automatic), Kong is still simple enough to defeat - you just fire your first three shots at his incoming rockets and save the rest of the chamber for his torso. With two-player gun action, it is better to formulate some sort of plan, and the best we've come up with is one player targetting all his shots at Kong while the other explodes any stray missiles.



MEDIUM STAGE 2: UNDERGROUND WEAPON STORAGE



You report back to the station after a job well done, but Chief Hambleton still isn't satisfied, grumbling that the main EVL members escaped. Police intelligence reports that some of the weapons from the black market are being stored at a nearby building site. As the EVL chopper was heading in that direction, Chief Hambleton reckons that the site would be a good place to continue your 'investigation'. Chief's message: "Stand firm boys, and remember to gun them down where they stand!"

Scene 1: The building site!

Sponging off the blood stains from their ruffled uniforms, Rage and Smarty prepare to venture into an altogether less inviting gangland area. The action has heated up immensely, and as a rule the baddies bring their firearms to bear at a much quicker rate (especially the jean-wearing Elvis lookalikes). The sequence above shows the initial part of the building site - the collapsing scaffolding occurs when you hit one of the two red barrels, and this scenic destruction can be timed so that the tower falls on troops emerging from behind the cement mixer, killing up to three chaps. Excellent stuff.



Rage and Smarty encounter Billy-bob and the rest of his family on top of a slag heap (above). Whilst happily gunning these bumpkins down where they stand, remember that they appear towards the top of the screen - so make sure your gun doesn't reload instead of bringing them to justice.

The main four pictures show various early stages in the building site, and you really need to aim well to avoid hitting innocents (above right). The problem of firing through dying baddies is also a problem (left), whilst strange angles and small targets with innocents running about makes the conveyor belt encounter another tough portion to overcome (far right)





After the conveyor belt massacre, our heroes turn their attention to the high ground, where a 30-shot machine gun can be found in some red barrels (far left). After the destruction of another tower, the action swings round to a JCB full of building site workers (sequence left). Very quick and sure firing is the order of the day here, as up to three well-armed EVL employees can be firing at once. If you pass this section without being wounded, you're doing very well.

Scene 2: Quarrying carnage!

Panting from their swift jogging executions, Rage and Smarty head for the quarry itself. The action gets frenzied from now on, with EVL throwing everything piece of equipment they have at you - including a dumper truck and a digger! The first part of the quarry level is shown is the sequence to the right, where EVL agents and brown-overalled special weapons troopers try to blow you away from positions on the ground and the scaffolding of the quarry conveyor belts. The movement of the screen is also misleading at some points during this section; with the screen panning to the right while an enemy appears in the left corner, or very well hidden behind that truck. Lock and load!





A prized automatic is up for grabs in a wooden crate, and this remains available to be shot at for a while (far left). Once the automatic is picked up, the strafing of EVL bounders can begin in earnest (left). Just before you enter into the second (and far more frenzied) part of the quarry, a mention must be made of the dumper truck. Firstly, shoot the windows out of the truck at the first opportunity, and ready yourself. To avoid being crushed (and losing a life) you must gun the driver down before he has chance to run over you. Aim carefully!



EXTENDED PLAY



The pace of this area is as frantic as any you're likely to see in Virtua Cop. Aside from a stabbing by a digger (far left), you must cope with the usual axe-wielding maniacs (middle left) and a multitude of enemies (left). It is precisely at this point that a second automatic may be gained from the quarry rim, and an extra life can be grabbed if you're proficient enough to aim at a fleeing brown overalled baddie that doesn't appear on your target.





The remainder of the area is even more taxing! Wave after wave of more intelligent troopers dive into view, including some grenade-throwers that are a pain to kill without civilian casualties. Watch for the awesome car explosion, too.

Scene 3: Inside the bunker!

Once the frantic outdoor quarry massacre has ended, our heroes in black ready themselves for a short but extremely bloody bout of EVIL SWAT team killing. The action is intense and claustrophobic, but worst of all, the SWAT team decide to jump out at you in groups of up to eight! Get ready for more intense gun action than you can possibly handle! Which is probably quite a fair bit.



The sequence below shows the gun combat you can expect from the bunker area. A policy of rapid firing followed by even more rapid reloading works well. So does blowing away everything like crazy!



Vital to your continued success in the battle against the units of SWAT members is the machine gun. Alas, this cannot be reloaded, and lasts but 30 shots, but before the bullets run out you can inflict some serious multiple woundings on anything that moves. Watch out for the peeping civilian midway through the level, but don't lose heart if he buys the farm - you'll still keep the machine gun (and this applies to every special weapon). A final brown overall man faces you - blow him away and nick his magnum before facing the madman known as King.

STAGE 2 MEDIUM BOSS KING

"SO YAH MADE IT THIS FAR, EH? HA HAR!!"

At the end of the SWAT filled corridor, you confront the leader of the gun storing operation, King. Dressed in green combat fatigues, this bearded gentlemen mocks you before laying into you with a flamethrower. With your Magnum (hopefully) in your hands, you should aim rapid-firing shots into his belly, and take care of any homing flames with extra firing. After taking a few hits, King disappears behind the storage boxes, and leaves you to fend off expert SWAT team snipers. These are extremely difficult to take out without being hit, as they fire almost immediately, so expect to incur heavy wounding before facing King for another onslaught. After taking another dozen or so bullets, King vanishes again, leaving more combat troopers to destroy. Keep a tight pattern down with one bullet for each enemy, before facing King again.

When all of King's energy is depleted, he falls to his knees ready to surrender. However, as Rage or Smarty, you shouldn't fall for this weak ploy again, so gun him down where he kneels before he can produce a pistol. With King out of the picture, you can return to base.





The awesome flamethrower that King carries (left), is set to maximum fuel consumption in two-player mode - expect only three plumes of fire normally.

EXPERT STAGE 3: GANG HEADQUARTERS



On your return to base, the Chief informs you that the entire EVL organisation is holed up at their business offices, and have taken hostages! The Virtua Police now have enough information to haul the EVL directors in and throw the book at them; all they need is for you to secure the building. This is going to test your sharpshooting skills to the very limits, but play it cool and watch for the odd surprise!
Chief's message: "I'm getting mighty sick of those EVL gangsters! Execute them all darn it, and bring me the leader's head on a plate!"

Scene 1: The car park!

While the Chief and the rest of the Virtua Police cover the rear of the building, Rage and Smarty grin knowingly at their new decoying mission; it's a fast chance for mountains of carnage! The beginning of the car park level is deceptively easy, and quite reminiscent of the start of stage one, with each EVL member requiring one aimed shot (or two if you want to see them twitch and stagger) followed by a quick reload. A shotgun is available extremely early (top right), and you are advised to obtain it immediately - your life may well depend on it!





The perimeter 'secured', Rage and Smarty move to the underground parking area, and this features some of the most spectacular take-downs ever seen. In the first room, avoid the barrel on the right, next to the truck (far left) if you have previously obtained the shotgun, as this barrel contains the rifle (which only lasts for 30 shots). Blow the central barrel after you've dispatched the baddies on the left - you'll take out the grenade throwers. The next rooms contain the finest barrel explosions ever (just blast away!), and try shooting the Exit sign before you reach the stairs.

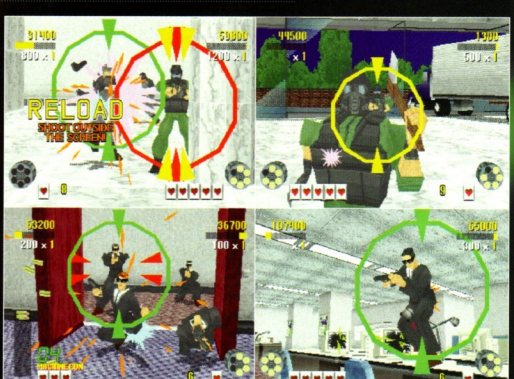
Scene 2: What a reception!

More than satisfied with their combat performance, the terrible twosome enter the main foyer, aware of the overwhelming odds they face. The main problem here is civilians: they are positioned at infuriating angles and impede your sharpshooting skills - indeed some are used as shields by less scrupulous EVL members. These targets present the most problem, requiring split-second timing. Midway through this hectic battle, an entire SWAT team decide to employ a novel approach to parking, and these chaps storm in from both sides of the screen simultaneously! Have you got the nerve to take them all on?



Another problem with those pesky SWAT members is how close they want to get to you (above and far right). "Employing hand-to-hand combat with a Virtua Police officer, eh? Unlucky for you. A rapid fire execution should make you think again!"

Before moving on from the foyer combat arena, you'll notice two standing hostages with their backs to you during this section. A fantastic aim is required to shoot the untargetted SWAT members that run behind them, and these should be shot as one carries an extra life (particularly useful in Ranking mode). After climbing the escalator, a machine gun is up for grabs, and can be used to dispense astonishing justice at a vast rate (right) before the central offices are encounted.



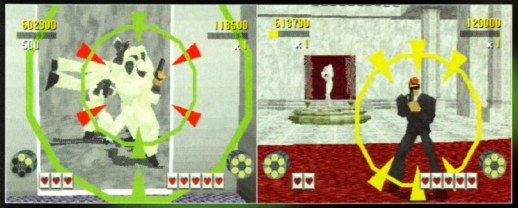


This is the trickiest section of the game, due in part to the sheer number of on-screen enemies (sequence left). Grab the automatic initially, and rapidly execute all the troopers behind the desk. Another trooper carries a magnum, so you have a choice of special weapons, and these are needed for the waves of EVL's finest. Note that the computer monitors can be damaged - the screen cracks, explodes and then shorts after repeated firing (above).



Towards the end of the office area, the EVL combat squads become increasingly frantic in their mission to annihilate you. After weaving your way through the office space (and hopefully picking up the automatic from a downed baddie), you reach the book-keeping department. Forget the dropped rifle (right) if you're already on autofire, and ready yourself for the secret bookcase - there's a whole welcoming commitee behind it (far right)!



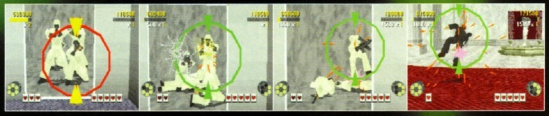


Scene 3: The head office!

Rage and Smarly enter the lift and spend a quality moment together (wiping the gore from their combat suits) before reaching the top floor of the building. This is the Penthouse suite, and offers an initial surprise for the unwary. As soon as the lift doors slide back, a tactical combat unit of EVL's finest rad-suited veterans ready themselves to gun you down with extreme prejudice!

A final two black suits stand in your way before the final showdown with the EVL president. Negotiate the fountain, and if you have time, why not blow the head off the statue just to show your displeasure? Incidentally, the sculpture itself is of Virtua Fighter's Sarah.

The rad-suited brigade present the hardest challenge of all - can you execute every one without being shot? These guys aim fast and die hard, but quite why they're suited for action is more of a mystery. Once these have been erased from the game, a right turn is followed by another fine aiming session where a couple of grenade throwers need justice despensed. Then it's into the final courtyard.



STAGE 3 EXPERT BOSS EVL PRESIDENT

"YOU'LL REGRET BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME!!"

This white-suited bald and bloated Godfather figure (known as the EVL President) registers his displeasure before filling the room with smoke. This gives him enough time to clamber into his dreadnought suit and attempt to make mincemeat out of you. In reality however, this chap is extremely easy to take down without even being hit once. Simply aim at his rocket launcher (in the same manner as for Kong on the first stage), and when he stops to aim his laser cannon, fire at that instead. After much punishment, the dreadnought suit blackens before finally exploding and sending the Boss flying through the air and into your custody. The game is up... or is it?



Initially, the EVL president mocks you before exploding his desk and clambering into his tactical dreadnought suit. Prepare for an awesome showdown!





Two-player tactics are similar for taking this guy down as for King - you gun away at the armour, while your partner takes care of the missiles. Beware of his laser cannon - as soon as this starts to be targetted, fire away at it, or expect some serious punishment. Repeat this process and eventually the President will yield. Is this the end, or is the real EVL leader still baying for your blood?

The sword-swinging saga just gets better! Cut down your enemy with glee!













The surrounding pictures show Genjuro enjoying combat with a variety of foes. Each combat round is preceded by a ritual bowing ceremony where respect and honour are shown.

He brandishes a mighty sword, and cuts swathes through the hapless humans in his path. The life-blood spurts forth from these little men, and terrible voiceless cries are uttered before they are swallowed up and taken from this world. Many men frantically scrabble to escape him, and all are fearful of his great power. He is known as the Devil and has torn his own heart from his body. Wailing ghosts from throughout time litter his travelling path to destiny, and he is relentless in his search for fresh mortals to dispatch. He wanders throughout the ages, hacking all asunder.

He appears in a desolate village and spies a young woman cradling a newly-born baby. She may know him or she may not, but a great fear surrounds her and she utters only silence. The wind quietly whistles and the village is silent, save for the woman's chattering teeth. The Devil seizes her and runs her through with his sword, lifting her high into the darkening skies. The wailing cries of the baby halts the Devil, who stalls in his skewering, and places the twitching body of the woman on a smooth rock. He retrieves the weapon from the woman, and gazes at the child through stone-like eyes. The night falls, and the Devil turns his back on the baby and walks away.

This marks the end of the Devil's attacks on defenceless villagers. He turns his killing spree to sword-bearing samurai warriors and no others. His unfathomable actions strike fear into the warrior castes, but the peasants rest easy in their beds. He continues his pillaging until 12 mighty warriors from throughout the land hear of his arrival, and rise to meet him. Through different purposes, these swordsmen must destroy Minazuki Zankurou - the Devil in human form.

When SNK released Samurai Spirits (known as Samurai Shodown in the West) almost three years ago, it rightly received monumental acclaim in arcades worldwide, and nearly succeeded in toppling Capcom's mighty Street Fighter series from its monopolising pedestal. There were many new factors that gave Shodown the edge (literally) such as the programming team (senior SNK programmers with purloined Capcom staff), luscious in-game backgrounds, interactive scenery and an excellent control system coupled with a variety of well-designed and recognisable characters. The gameplay was fluid, but the main innovation was the introduction of weapons; a fighting addition previously only seen in the hands of the Spanish Street Fighter premadona, Vega (or Balrog depending on what version of the game you played).

As the success of Shodown grew, arcade punters demanded a sequel featuring more of everything, and SNK duly obliged, producing Samurai Spirits 2 (or Shodown 2) in mid 1994. This featured a refinement of fighting techniques, the balancing of over-powerful fighters (such as the colossal Earthquake), a cast of new faces (and the removal of the Demon Tam Tam) and the all-important power moves and extra attacks. The phenomena continued, and Shodown 2 became yet another Neo Geo success story, despite the fact that many people preferred the feel and play of the original. Now the third instalment is here, and scheduled for a December release in Japan (cartridge on the 1st, CD on the 22nd), whilst the identical arcade version is drawing crowds throughout this country.

SAMURAI SHODOWN 3 - Return to the blood-bath battlefields for a third time!



There is no doubt regarding the quality of the hand-drawn graphics in Samurai Shodown 3, as the detail in the pondering Hanzo demonstrates (left).

To have no fear! To slice and kill!



EXTENDED PLAY

NG — THE SPIRITS RETURN
SAMURAI SHODOWN 3
SNK — AVAILABLE NOW IN ARCADES. AVAILABLE ON CD FROM JANUARY '96





Although following on from the first and second titles with a continuing storyline, the content and style of the game has undergone a transformation, as SNK have attempted to construct a new fighting title that borrows from the previous incarnations without being just another upgrade.





More combat showing a vicious battle with both warriors powered up to the maximum. Once your power gauge starts to burn, try unleashing your awesome special attacks.

MIGHTY WARRIORS GATHER FROM ACROSS THE LAND

Part of this change are the variety of characters; Shodown 3 has lost some of the less popular combatants, supplementing them with carefully playtested and all new warriors. The choice of characters is limited to 12: seven previously seen warriors, and five all-new honour-bound fighters. Apart from these chosen few, there are two other unseen opponents to face.

CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY

Also present is a choice of paths to destiny; for those unsure of their character's abilities to the expert Shodown gamer. Once you have selected your character, you may choose whether your character is Good or Evil. Good characters learn their arts by utilising Chivalry, whilst Evil characters draw their power from Treachery. These are also known as 'Slash' (Good) and 'Bust' (Evil) in the actual selection screen.

Good and Evil characters are primarily different because of the sword that they use, and these swords are known by their Buddhist terms. The Chivalrous character wields the bizarrely named 'Shuura' (Scene of Carnage), whilst the Treacherous samurai holds the 'Rasetsu' (Hungry Devils' Hell). These differing swords essentially influence the particular samurai's style of play, and means that a Good character has a number of different moves from the Evil equivalent.

SELECT YOUR FIGHTING GRADE

After selecting your character's destiny, you then decide upon their level of ability. There are three to choose from, the 'Sword Guest' (or Beginner's Mode), the 'Sword Flower' (Intermediate Mode) and the 'Sword Sacred' (Advanced Mode), and all of the grades can be changed before any battle. The beginner's mode endows your fighter with five auto-guards and leads to confrontations favouring the player, and is a good way to familiarise yourself with the Shodown control system. The intermediate mode allows normal fighting to occur, whilst the advanced mode gives your character a permanent state of anger and a fully powered-up rage gauge at the expense of blocking.







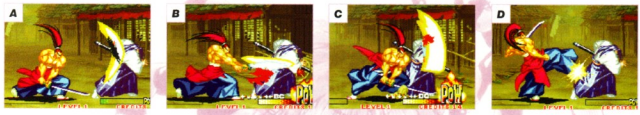






The initial stages of character selection (above) show the wealth of extra detail afforded by the programmers of the third Shodown title. Meanwhile, Hanzo produces a scorcher of a technique, whilst Galford drops a log (left) to the amusement of Poppy, his pet dog.

New features and fighting motions expand the play!
Power-up the anger gauge and defeat the Devil!



Genjuro is happy to oblige when asked to demonstrate the four basic attacking moves on a hapless Ukyo (left).

BASIC ATTACKS

The usual Neo Geo four buttons are employed for this game. A, B and C buttons executes a light, medium or strong slash whilst the D button enables a kick. With A + B buttons pressed together, your character may dodge the blows of an enemy (see below).

DEFEND YOUR HONOUR!!

Blocking in Samurai Shodown is handled in the usual manner. Pull back to block and down-back to crouch and block. Familiarise yourself with the controls, as the more cunning crouching block attack may be employed on an unsuspecting opponent. A new feature for the Samurai saga is the ability to block attacks in mid-air. This feature comes in handy when jumping towards a CPU opponent.

GRAB AND HURL

All of the characters benefit from an ability to grab an opponent a throw them forward, after which a mighty blow can be struck. This is achieved by pressing C when close, but other characters have an extended range of normal throws (such as Gaira) and some even have air throws (like Nakoruru) for ultimate aerial supremacy.





Hanzo shows off the dodging technique developed for Samurai Shodown 3 (above). Timing is all-important when attempting a dodge, as the speed of the footwork sometimes places you back in the frey all too quickly.

USE NIMBLE FOOTWORK TO WEAVE WITH GRACE AND BEAUTY!

Samurai Shodown 3 employs two new techniques that are used when dodging an opponent. By pressing A + B together when close, your character confuses the opponent by swiftly stepping round them to attack from behind. When in combat, this is a great way to inflict a vast amount of damage on an unguarded foe. The other technique is the avoiding sidestep previously seen in King of Fighters '95. By pressing A + B when your character is at some distance from the enemy, he or she quickly moves to the side of the arena, and thus avoids any projectile attacks hurled by the enemy.



A bemused Genjuro looks on whilst a nimble-footed Hanzo weaves around him (left). A whole host of extra features that have not been seen in previous Shodowns make this a well-rounded and highly polished beat 'em up.

Channel your rage into the Anger Gauge!



ENGAGE THE RAGE!!

Press A + B + C together, and a plume of mystical fire engulfs your samurai as he or she powers up the Rage Gauge, becoming increasingly angered until maximum power is reached. After this supreme anger has occurred, your character may perform a special manoeuvre, and any wounds inflict more damage on your opponent than normal. The Rage (or Anger) Gauge is located at the bottom of the screen once battle commences, and is powered up either by the enraging technique, or by striking an opponent or being hit yourself.



A faster way of channelling your furious rage is to set yourself alight with magical fire (left), but this can leave you dangerously exposed to a strong counter-attack. Otherwise, the power meter only increases after a series of successful strikes.

Use these tips to survive the carnage and then kill without mercy!

SWORD-LOCKING FOR FRANTIC BATTLING!!

The frantic struggle for the upper hand extends to a special 'sword clash' that has featured in both Shodown predecessors. During a round, both characters may clash their swords together at precisely the same time, leading to a sword lock, flying sparks and a dramatic struggle. By hammering the buttons with great relish you may overcome your opponent and disarm them, sending their weapon flying and gaining the upper hand.





A sword lock in mid-flow (left) is followed by an intense struggle (below). Hit those buttons like lightning!



Samurai Shodown 3 features a fair amount of crimson blood exiting a bleeding fighter after a particularly powerful strike. As with previous Shodown games, there is the option to turn off the gore or to recolour it white if the sight of blood offends you!

TAKE THE 'WHITE-BLADED TRUE SWORD' BY HAND!

Once the sword-locking has taken effect and you are left without a weapon, a new feature enables a disarmed warrior to turn this to an advantage by utilising the body strike. Perform a half-circle towards your opponent as they strike, and your character grabs the enemy weapon by the blade with a palm clasp, and yanks it away, leaving a shocked (and now disarmed) enemy ripe for the fisticuff retaliation that automatically follows. This particular technique is incredible to watch but also incredibly difficult to perform successfully and you could well be killed when attempting to catch a strong sword slash! Use with caution.





The white bladed true sword technique is admirably demonstrated (right and far right), but in the heat of battle, the difficulty of the sword-grabbing motion makes this one of the most difficult moves in the entire game. One for true masters only.

Break through the opponent's defence and stab them!

STAGGER YOUR FOE WITH THE DEFENCE CRUSHERS

Two final new techniques have made their way into this fighting extravaganza, and they are both designed to unbalance the enemy who is performing a crouching block. By pressing forward and BC when close, you can push the enemy a couple of steps backward, during which time you can start a series of devastating attacking strikes. An alternative to this is the pulling defence crusher that is achieved by pressing back and BC. Both these attacks make your enemy prone and subject to a humiliating take-down. Both motions push your opponent some distance so this technique works well for warriors with lengthy weaponry like Kyoshiro and Genjuro.



Original heroes return with greater power than ever before!!







Samurai Shodown 3 features many beautifully-drawn illustrations that accompany the frenzy of sword-play. This has to be one of the finest illustrated beat 'em ups from SNK so far, showing the meticulous care and attention to detail that the Shodown trilogy is famous for.

1. HOAHMARU This maturing fighter and central character in the Shodown trilogy has travelled far and wide in his never-ending quest to become the ultimate bladed fighter. Hoahmaru's wanderings to the East and the West to hone his skills led him to a village that had previously received a visitation from the Devil. A single child survivor encourages Hoahmaru to root out the Devil and avenge the massacre, and Hoahmaru accepts without hesitation. Perhaps Hoahmaru should have questioned the child, as 'the little one' stopped the bloodshed single-handedly, and appears to be the real child of the Devil, responsible for Zankuro turning his attention to Samurai blood...

Hoahmaru appears little changed from Shodown 2; still able to perform his cyclone slash and crescent moon, but these have supplemented with a number of new moves and flesh out Hoahmaru into a good steady fighter.

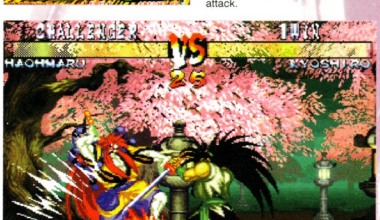
2. NAKORURU She has been gently cradled by Mother Earth from childhood, and has dedicated her life to the service of the Miko shrine. Recently, she has become aware of disturbances in the fabric of Nature's harmony caused by the Devil, and sets off to save his soul and abnormal fighting spirit. Accompanying her is the stepmother of the treasured "chichi-ushi" (Father Bear) sword; Jishuucho, and her protector; a wolf named Thikruu.

Nakoruru's strengths lie in her air supremacy, nimbleness and ability to jump around the sides of the screen. Her Hawk accompanies her Good character, and the Wolf guards her Evil twin, and this can be ridden in combat.

3. HANZO HATTORI The feared and most powerful of all the Ninjas in the Iga Clan. Clan elders have requested him to investigate the death of a sword-bearing Samurai at the hands of the Devil during a massacre some years ago. Hanzo also has personal reasons for confronting the Devil as he realises that Zankuro is actually an old friend...



Swift and nimble with a vast array of special powers, Hanzo is a pleasure to control. His Earth Opener and Air Shurikens complement his 'Log' ability and simple super attack.





4. GALFORD The American Ninja travels throughout the lands with his pet dog, Poppy. He encounters a massacred village and a mysterious young child, and hunts down the Devil after taking to the child. His motives are to bring down the Devil so that justice can prevail.

Galford is another character that has changed little since previous Shodowns. His plasma attack and other basic moves are extremely similar to Hanzo's, but Galford has the added option of Poppy-based attacks; and these are somewhat different than before.

5. KYOSHIRO SENRYO The flamboyant Kabuki actor holds a Japanese sword and is questing to perfect his dancing style. He watches the Devil at work, and is impressed and moved by the 'Devil's Dance' to such an extent that he fights to face him and make his own dance as beautiful.

Kyoshiro's main strength is his long-ranged staff attacks, meaning that enemies can be dispatched before they close. Other than a few new spectacular moves, Kyoshiro is much the same as he ever was.

6. UKYO TACHIBANA Afflicted by a terrible disease, this master of "iai-kiri" is targeted by the Devil after his school is struck by Zankuro's terrible power. Ukyo's teacher and a guardsman both fall to Zankuro's might, and Ukyo set off to avenge both their deaths.

An unassuming character, but with his Apple slice and Heaven's Gales make him an entertaining character to play. His range of attacks have been upped considerably since his last outing.

7. GENJURO KIBAGAMI An aimless wanderer, Genjuro still aims to defeat Hoahmaru and has one purpose; to bring down his sword gripped in his left hand into the chest of any he faces. he feels no emotion at killing anyone; even the Devil.

An extremely powerful character with spectacular moves involving magical playing cards, Genjuro is easy to get to grips with and is initially similar to Haohmaru. A very powerful character indeed, and one of the finest in the game.

The sweet pink blossom of Hoahmaru's park stage complements the blood-lust and skewering that takes place in the foreground (left), whilst Genjuro employs a direct hit (above left).

Kyoshiro demonstrates one of his many new spectacular and combat-winning strikes; known as the Toad Plague. This is just one of the many extra attacks possessed by the veterans of previous Shodowns.











The other-worldly being of supreme power seeks to purify himself still further. The self-proclaimed "Reliever of Souls", he continues his ongoing mission to kill all base human beings with a phase shift and a cry of agony. The blood still tastes as fresh as the day he attained his god-like status, but now there is a noticeable disturbance in the cosmos. Instead of attempting to destroy all of Nature's creations, he attempts to seek out this tearing of the ether, and views the massive destructive force of the Devil. Seeing the

Deal death to the devil with the devastating Dark Destroyer!



The flamboyant show-off has some of the most spectacular magical attacks in the game, including the fabled Dark Destroyer (right).







More Amakusa action, with the Miasma Plasma (top left), the Judgement Blow (above), and the Evil Hornet Gouger Forward (left).

Amakusa - *Heaven's fallen angel of destruction seeks to seize Zankuro's power!*



limitless power, his spirit shines bright as he sets off to obtain this power through the slow and painful death of Zankuro.

The most flamboyant of all the characters in Samurai Shodown 3, Amakusa is a posing but extremely powerful in the combat arena. His extreme magical prowess allows him to summon great power and channel it into his weapon; a magical crystal ball. Amakusa's speed and confusing moves are his strengths; his blurring dashes can leave an opponent extremely unguarded, and his air attacks complicate combat still further as the opponent doesn't know where to block. Control Amakusa and you control a stylish and frighteningly confusing immortal.

AMAKUSA'S HOME STAGE - STONE CIRCLE OF THE ETHER

With a supernatural pink sky and a hovering magical rock, this stage is located between the worlds of the mortal and the immortal. Amakusa has constructed the channelling place himself, and the many granite rocks have been personally blessed by the master magician. During the final stages of the fight, the arena reacts to the possibility of Amakusa's defeat, and directs energy from the sky into the circle, turning the stage into a giant focussing shell.

AMAKUSA'S CHIVALRY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
EVIL HORNET GOUGER FORWARD	⬅↙⬇↘➡ + *D*
EVIL HORNET GOUGER REVERSE	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + *D*
HOLY SPIRIT SLICER	⬇↘➡ + *Slash*
DARK DESTROYER	➡⬅↙⬇↘➡ + *C then Slash*
JUDGEMENT BLOW	➡↘⬇ + *C*
PHOENIX FLASH	⬅➡⬅➡ + *Slash*
MIASMA PLASMA	⬅↙⬅ + *A*
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
LEGIONS OF HADES BLITZ	⬅➡⬇↘ + *BC*

AMAKUSA'S TREACHERY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
EVIL HORNET GOUGER FORWARD	⬅↙⬇↘➡ + *D*
EVIL HORNET GOUGER REVERSE	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + *D*
UNDERWORLD LORD BLAST	⬇↘➡ + *Slash*
DARK DESTROYER	➡⬅↙⬇↘➡ + *C then Slash*
JUDGEMENT BLOW	➡↘⬇ + *C*
INVITATION TO EVIL	⬅➡⬅➡ + *Slash*
MIASMA PLASMA	⬅↙⬅ + *A*
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
LEGIONS OF HADES BLITZ	⬅➡⬇↘ + *BC*

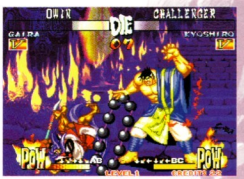
Gaira Caffien - The rowdiest monk under the sun is burning with rage for Zankuro!







Gaira uses beads and brawn to beat baddies' brains out!









Note Gaira's plethora of holds (far right), and some explosive bead-wielding. Gaira is a fantastic replacement for the aging Wan-fu.



Gaira is the grand-child of Wachu, and an extremely unruly and ill-tempered young fighter. His fiery temperament lands him in trouble with Wachu, and after a coarse exchange of words, Gaira leaves the temple forever. Outside the confines (and magical defence) of the temple, Gaira witnesses the Devil mercilessly slaughtering an innocent, and instead of leaping to the victim's rescue, the young giant cowers in terror. After witnessing such a great might and fighting spirit, Gaira realises that he is able to defeat this foe and gain much power, and so he resolves to destroy him.

The largest character in Samurai Shodown 3 plays a little like his predecessor (Wan-fu), utilising grabs and throws plus a serious amount of pummelling from his large chain of metal balls. His Nag Blast is typical of his loud and aggressive manoeuvres, and his ground fireballs only supplement this view. Gaira is also the fighter most adept at throws, and is especially excellent at grabbing incoming airborne opponents. He also has the Wan-fu grab and hurl techniques that cause immense damage, but is a character that is strongest in close combat - he has no ranged attacks whatsoever.

GAIRA'S HOME STAGE - THE TEMPLE DOJO AT SUNSET

Gaira has booted out Nicotine and has claimed the old man's stage as his own. The lantern-lined steps disappear into rolling mist whilst light from the lanterns twinkles in the twilight breeze. The restful silent is broken by the sounds of battle, as the antique lighting is destroyed by crashing samurai blades, and after the first round, the sun sets and the setting darkens to a deep orange. In the very last stages of the fight, the sun blinks out of existence and the scene turns dark blue with floating flickering fire replacing the lanterns - a magical sight to behold.

GAIRA'S CHIVALRY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
PRUDENCE PUNCH	During Jump ↓ + C
100 HEAVE BODY BLOW	During Jump ↓ + C
NAG BLAST	↓↙← + A
VICTORY RISER	→↓↘ + Slash
PROFOUND PUMMEL	↓↘→ + AB
EARTHQUAKE ASSAULT	↓↓ + AB
CEILING SLAM GRABBER	←↓↙ + A
HARD HEAD GRABBER	←↓↙ + B
REVERSE TWIRL GRAB	←↓↙ + C
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
FIST FLASH DANCE	↓↘→↓↘ + AB

GAIRA'S TREACHERY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
100 HUNDRED DROPPER	During Jump ↓ + D
NAG BLAST	↓↙← + A
DEADLY POKES	↓↘→ + Slash
EARTHQUAKE ASSAULT	↓↓ + AB
HEAVENS HEART SLICER	↓↙←→ + AB
HADES HEART SLICER	↓↙←→ + CD
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
FIST FLASH DANCE	↓↘→↓↘ + AB



Bizarre teleporting antics and a reliance on his chained shuriken make Basara a strange but pleasing being to control.





Basara - *The fury of the wounded romantic lives again to avenge his murdered loved one!*





Basara witnessed the awesome destructive power of the Devil first hand when his entire town was decimated. He could cope with the loss of his home, but the Devil indiscriminately slaughtered his loved one and tore her spirit from the afterlife. Such was his mourning, that Basara felt that he himself had been wiped out, and a great despair engulfed him. Pulling himself back from the brink of death by thoughts of revenge (and the rescue of his beloved's soul from the Devil's wrath), he summoned the dark arts to aid him, and is unflinching in his devotion to kill the Devil. If thwarted, his thoughts are to feign to be a dead body, and catch the Devil unawares...

The ghoul that Basara has become is expert in throwing attacks, and mainly uses these heavy shuriken throws to stall opponents. He has a marvellous teleport which can catch an attacking foe off-guard, and his Shadow Sucker is an excellent grabbing attack. The teleporting chain shuriken attack is another fine move, and Basara has many other bloody attacks, making him a favourite amongst the more bloodthirsty players. His special attack is awesome, as he summons his loved one's spirit to aid him.

With evil in your eyes you must execute all your enemies!



An cautious Genjuro pays for his slow reactions (above). Earlier in the round, Basara launched a Soul of the Beast which is very difficult to block (right).



BASARA'S HOME STAGE - RUINED HOME

Bathed in red candle-light is the dojo in Basara's town, now in ruins following the Devil's attack. This is Basara's centre for channelling evil power and it shows - the rotting woodwork and dilapidated panels (that may be sliced apart) show the lack of care and attention as well as the hopelessness of Basara's situation. After the first round, a gust of supernatural wind snuffs the candles out leading to the following rounds being fought by the light of the moon, before the arena disappears completely and the spirits take over.

BASARA'S CHIVALRY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
STABBING FEET	*During Jump* ↓ + D
FRIENDLY RIP	←↙↓↘→ + A
SHADOW STITCHER	→↘↓↙← + Slash
AIRBORNE SLASH	*At Jump peak* ↓↘→ + Slash
GROUND SLASH	↓↘→ + Slash
SOUL SUCKER	↓↙← + D
SOUL OF THE BEAST	←↘↓↙ + C
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
SHADOW DANCE PAYBACK	←↙↓↘→← + AB

BASARA'S TREACHERY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
STABBING FEET	*During Jump* ↓ + D
FRIENDLY RIP	←↙↓↘→ + A
SHADOW EXIT	→↙↓↘ + Slash
AIRBORNE SLASH	*At Jump peak* ↓↘→ + Slash
GROUND SLASH	↓↘→ + Slash
SOUL SUCKER	↓↙← + D
SHADOW PERIL	→←→ + A, B, C or D
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
SHADOW DANCE DREAM PULL	←↙↓↘→← + BC









Rimnerel - The ice-cold snow maiden who fights for her older sister!

Rimnerel is Nakoruru's younger sister, and is a peaceful living nature-nymph, but with a slightly hot-headed temperament due to her immaturity. She has studied ice-magic in great detail, and although she does not possess the heightened powers of her chosen sister, she still channels her power from the miko shrine. A somewhat naive novice, Rimnerel becomes aware (through her astral walking) of a being known as Amakusa who is trying to destroy nature. While her sister attempts to save the Devil himself, Rimnerel's own motives lead her in a determined quest to confront Amakusa.

Being a mistress of ice magic, Rimnerel uses freezing projectile attacks almost exclusively in combat. She has a stabbing ice attack, a ground freeze that causes the foe to slip and slide backwards (allowing Rimnerel to leap in and stab at the unbalanced opponent) and an air ice-ball that initially seems rather pointless, but immobilises jumping opponents. All her defensive moves make her very hard to strike, and her speed and wall-jumping ability makes her an excellent Samurai to choose. Finally, her spectacular special move is easy to pull off and finishes a round excellently.



Finish off foes with fearsome freezing fighting abilities!





RIMNEREL'S HOME STAGE - NATURE'S HIDEAWAY.

Deep in the frozen forests of the northern tundra lies a crystal lake of pure water. In a small snow-covered wooden shack lives an elderly man of nature, and the sensei of both Nakoruru and Rimnerel. Halfway through the fighting action, the old man (plus another figure and Nakoruru providing she isn't being controlled) appears from the hut to watch the proceedings whilst a variety of wild animals frolic in the snow. During final combat, the sky darkens to a deep blue and the magical mists descend whilst giant snowflakes softly float earthward.



RIMNEREL'S CHIVALRY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
KONRIL SHIRA	During Jump ➡↘⬇ + A
KONRIL MYU	⬇↙⬅ + A
LUPU QUALL	⬇↘➡ + Slash
KAMUI SHTOKKE	⬇↙⬅➡ + C
RUPU TU NU TIA	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + B
KONRIL NONRIL	➡⬇↘ + A
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
RUPU KAMUI EMYU	➡↘⬇↙⬅➡↘⬇↙⬅ + CD

RIMNEREL'S TREACHERY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
KONRIL SHIRA	During Jump ➡↘⬇ + A
KONRIL MYU	⬇↙⬅ + A
LUPU QUALL	⬇↘➡ + Slash
LUPA THORNUMU	➡ + AB
RUPU TU NA YAKU	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + D
UPUN WO	Slash repeatedly
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
RUPU KAMUI EMYU	➡↘⬇↙⬅➡↘⬇↙ + CD

Shizumaru - The boy in search of the demon from his past!









Shizumaru suffers from amnesia, and all he can remember is a distant vision of a world stained red with blood from a thousand lost souls. This nightmare constantly haunts him, and is the only key to his childhood, except for a further vision of a dimly-shining bow. What can all this mean? Central to Shizumaru's tortured mind is a shadowy figure brandishing a mighty sword, and the wailing of his many victims. Seeing this great foe as central to unlocking his mind, Shizumaru practices

Shizumaru can slice and stab with the Scarlet Sword!

phantasmagoric techniques in order to ready himself for the upcoming combat. Despite having little memory at all, he hopes that the forthcoming fighting will produce the key to unlocking his past.

A quick and deadly fighter, Shizumaru uses a steel umbrella in the combat zone, which he can spin at great speeds, or stab at his victims. One of his better attacks is the 'Scarlet Sword Rains of Time' which involves him jumping and then hovering over the opponent before stabbing downwards with his umbrella. This can be repeated over and over again if the victim is willing, and can inflict vast damage to unsuspecting warriors. This technique and the similar 'Deadly Drizzle' is only available to the treacherous side of Shizumaru as well as the easier of the two commands that activate his spectacular power attack, the interestingly named 'Scarlet Sword Deadly Downpour Slice'.







Shizumaru's evil side can use his umbrella to float down onto enemies using the Scarlet Sword Deadly Drizzle (above).



SHIZUMARU'S HOME STAGE - BAMBOO FOREST

Shizumaru appears to have inherited Jubei Yagu's home in the forest, as combat takes place under a canopy of bamboo trees. Sunlight pierces the arena intermittently as leaves whistle around and soft chimes ring out in the background. During final combat, the foreground trees are chopped away as the sun is blocked out and the background changes to dark green. Remember to engage in a spot of wood-cutting as some of the bamboo shoots may be chopped down.



SHIZUMARU'S CHIVALRY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
DOWNPOUR THRUST	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + Slash
MIST BLADE	⬇↘➡ + Slash
SCARLET SWORD HAILFIRE	⬅↙⬇↘➡ + A
WINDSHEAR SLICE	⬅⬇↙ + Slash
CROSSCURRENT SLICER	➡↙⬇↘ + Slash
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
HURRICANE SHREDDER SLASH	➡↘⬇↙⬅➡↘⬇↙ + CD

SHIZUMARU'S TREACHERY TECHNIQUES	
SPECIAL MOVES	
RAINS OF TIME	During Jump ⬇ + C
SCARLET SWORD DEADLY DRIZZLE	During Jump ⬆ + C
SCARLET SWORD MIST BLAST	⬇↘➡ + Slash
DOWNPOUR THRUST	⬅⬇↙ + Slash
CROSSCURRENT SLICER	➡↙⬇↘ + Slash
SUPER DEATH STRIKE	
DEADLY DOWNPOUR SLICE	➡⬅↙⬇↘➡ + AB



KABUKO THE REFEREE



As many fans of the previous Shodowns are aware, the small shrouded figure hopping around in the background vigorously waving flags is the mysterious overseer of the tournament proceedings. Unfortunately, he has retired from Shodown 3's backdrops, but makes a surprise appearance halfway through the one player game.

After your fifth victorious combat has finished, this master of killer techniques bursts into view, and whisks you off to his private dojo for a spot of katana-wielding action in front of a number of guest referees. However, unlike before, Kubuko refrains from adopting his 'Tung Fu Rue' stance, but morphs amazingly into your character's alter ego before engaging you in battle. This frighteningly dexterous opponent is highly difficult to defeat, but when he eventually yields, the battle to challenge the Devil himself becomes all the more fierce!

A Samurai fears not death! To destroy all enemies! Now you must pit your skills against the tournament masters!







That body-morphing Kabuko is a tricky gentleman to defeat, using all of your own character's strikes in a test of your fighting potential. When beaten, he notes down your prowess and leaves you to your quest.

ZANKURO MINAZUKI - THE DEVIL

Once all your opponents and the referee have been sliced and diced, the game's final and ultimate boss stomps into view. Your combat ability has attracted Zankuro's attention, and he seeks you out to defeat you without mercy. The pillager of the wastes has finally summoned you to his fighting temple; so sharpen your blade and ready yourself for the fight of your life!

With a stunning range of special moves, coupled with strength and endurance, this giant warrior-god is the ultimate adversary in Samurai Shodown 3. As lighting flickers and thunder rumbles, Zankuro tightens his grip on his huge sword before employing a crossed-hands technique once the fighting begins. Zankuro's main strengths lie in the unbelievable damage he inflicts from his sword; his most powerful hacking causes devastating amounts of wounding. The best tactic here is to lie low in a defensive posture, and hack at him after he jumps in to attack. Ranged attacks are essential here, and **MAXIMUM** found that Kyoshiro's long staff attacks work well here.

After the normal battle has finished and you have proved your worth by defeating Zankuro, he grows angry and does not yield; despite the destruction of his temple arena. He challenges you to another round; and this time he is almost unstoppable, utilising his full range of special moves. Once again, you must overcome his impossible might, after which he curses your existence and is banished to the ether for an eternity.









The mighty Zankuro Minazuki in all his glory. The Devil himself has been unleashed into your domain!



After a battle that the gods themselves would have gasped at, our dancing actor Kyoshiro managed to defeat this giant of death in a triumph of good over evil. Let there be dancing and merriment!! A toast to Kyoshiro! Well done!





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WAIT FOR IT...

Nintendo

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RETURN FIRE - Only the hardest can survive the Maps O' Death!

THE COMPANION DISC TO 3DO CLASSIC RETURN FIRE!



Wartime strategy and action combine to provide an excellent and playable game. Choose your vehicle and run the gauntlet searching for that elusive flag. The destruction involved is immense!

Maps O' Death has finally arrived on the 3DO, and **MAXIMUM** has found this to be an excellent war strategy game with just the right blend of action and strategy to satisfy arcade and simulation fans alike. This is a 3D-viewed Desert Strike inspired title, but with a choice of four vehicles and an excellent variety of enemy units and gun emplacements to destroy before the flag is finally found. A mention must be made of the two-player mode, as although this special Extended Play doesn't cover the two-player option, **MAXIMUM** has found it to be also outstanding apart from a slightly limiting viewpoint, but fans of the original should know this already. Note that this is a commendable two-player action game, and a must for Desert Strike fans. The following mini-guide is intended to introduce new players to the delights of this classic 3DO title, and also shows one of the sample levels from the newly released Maps O' Death expansion disc.

BARON VON WOLFSHIELD OUTLINES YOUR COMBAT STRATEGY

The missions you are about to undertake are some of the most hazardous known to man. You are delving deep into enemy territory in a desperate attempt to destroy their encampments and capture their flag. This is a formidable assignment and some of you chaps won't be coming back, but remember, laying down your life for the good of the team is a marvellous example to one and all. Gentlemen, I salute you from my three-mile deep lead-lined bunker. Now get in there and grab that flag!

The enemy is coloured green. You shall search the war area for their flag; a symbol of their power and steal it. Use your Helicopter, ASV (Armoured Support Vehicle) or Tank to roam the theatre of war, and then send your lightly armoured jeep to grab the flag itself. Scour the battlefield for the well-guarded Flag Tower and destroy it, but remember that there are dummy towers without flags to contend with. Once the flag is in your possession, return to the bunker and the battle is ours!







The three main combat vehicles all have their own strengths and weaknesses (sequence left), but the most effective seems to be the Armed Support Vehicle as it is fitted with excellent armour.

Use the latest military hardware to attack and devastate the enemy!

Some of the levels on Maps O' Death are quite a sight to behold (right). When you encounter enemy installations of this magnitude, it is advisable to plough a defensive tunnel and hope for the best!





ATTACK HELICOPTER

ASSOCIATED MUSIC: ***WAGNER - THE RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES - THE VALKYRIE***

VEHICLE DATA
NUMBER AVAILABLE: ***3***
SHELLS: ***100***
ROCKETS: ***50***



The combat copter is a joy to fly, and handles in exactly the same way as the Desert Strike chopper. It fires a mixture of low energy wide-bursting shells, or high-impact rockets which can decimate entire enemy encampments. The Attack Helicopter is extremely useful for reconnaissance missions where detailed knowledge of enemy bases is required.



A combat vehicle takes a pummelling (above) from the surrounding turrets. These and the pesky attack helicopters are the enemies to watch for when completing your level.

BROWN FOUR STANDING BY!

In order to complete your arduous task, the Baron has shipped in some of the latest military hardware. Four different vehicles are available, and all have their own strengths and weaknesses. Note that the numbers of vehicles available vary depending on the mission.

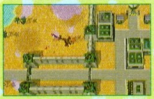
MAPS O' DEATH - ADVANCE INTO ALL-NEW ENEMY STRONGHOLDS AND KILL, KILL, KILL!!

Following the basic vehicle deployment, cunning tactics are required in order to secure the enemy flag with the minimum of casualties. With this in mind, **MAXIMUM** offers a guide to one of the new levels in Maps O' Death, with details of vehicle deployment and general tactics that apply to all of the missions contained in this game. So without further delay, let us depart to the secret island hideaway and ready ourselves for an assault on the mainland. Our combat zone is the secret Isle of Thunder!

WARNING! MAPS O' DEATH** REQUIRES ORIGINAL VERSION OF **RETURN FIRE

RETURN FIRE CLOSE-UP







COMBAT TANK

ASSOCIATED MUSIC: ***HOLST - MARS: BRINGER OF WAR - THE PLANETS***



VEHICLE DATA
NUMBER AVAILABLE: ***3***
SHELLS: ***150***
ROCKETS: ***0***

A fast-moving light tank is available for skirmishing attacks. This benefits from a swivelling turret and two different type of shells. The only problem is the light armour that can only deflect up to ten shots without being breached. The Tank should be used to clear a lightly defended enemy encampment and securing a previously attacked (and mostly deserted) area.

Reports are coming in of enemy activity on the Isle of Thunder!







STAGE 1: *HELICOPTER RECON*

After a brief studying of the combat area (both on the main map and the radar screen), ponder over your chosen force. It consists of one Attack Helicopter, two Tanks, two ASVs and three jeeps.Pick the chopper, and commence a sweeping search of the islands. Beware of the small irritating enemy helicopters, and commence evasive manoeuvring when flying over enemy fortifications. Continue in an easterly direction until you reach the south-eastern tip of the main island, where you'll find the green army flag base nestling in the middle of a number of gun turrets. There is another base located in the south and one on a small north-eastern island. One of these flag bases contains the actual flag, but this varies every time you play. Remember that you only have enough fuel to fly to one base before returning, so bomb the flag base and fly back to your bunker. Try not to get caught in the cross-fire.







STAGE 2: *ASV EXPLORATION*

After a maximum of three sorties, your battered helicopter is now in need of retirement - once the actual flag has been located. Now you need to break through the enemy defences and clear a path to the flag base. For this you'll need one of your ASVs. Power it up and trundle towards those gun turrets. Remember to use available cover (such as palm trees and rubble) to hide from rocket fire before securing the area. There are supplies of both fuel and ordinance to be found in the main enemy encampments, and your ASV armour should hold. Get as far as you can with your first ASV, and then return to the bunker (or sacrifice it to save some time - this is an acceptable loss on this stage).

ASV - ARMOURED SUPPORT

ASSOCIATED MUSIC: ***GRIEG - IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING - PEER GYNT***



VEHICLE DATA
NUMBER AVAILABLE: ***3***
MISSILES: ***100***
MINES: ***30***

This is a slow-moving caterpillar all-terrain vehicle with huge amounts of steel armour plating. With the added bonus of mine-laying, this also fires missiles but the main strength lies in the hits it can withstand. This is an excellent (if a little slow-moving) piece of military hardware that should be sent in to clear heavily-defended enemy bases.

Despatch your battle team to investigate. Then kill everyone you can find!!
Blow up buildings for no reason! Squash sleeping soldiers as they lie in their tents!









RETURN FIRE CLOSE-UP





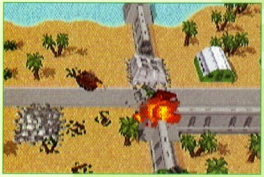


Seize the flag then drive your jeep over the wounded soldiers' legs!





Tank strafing is an integral part of the Return Fire gaming experience. Some of these turrets are extremely difficult to hit (especially when trees block your line of sight), but the vast majority of turrets must be destroyed in order for you to contine your mission.



STAGE 3: *SECURE THE AREA*

Once a dangerous path of death has been scorched from your bunker to the enemy flag, choose one of your tanks to secure the surrounding area. Now is the time to destroy gun turrets that are further away from the ASV's path of death, as these still have the range to destroy your jeep. Once a satisfactory roadway has been blasted (with room to manoeuvre either side of the central path), you may return to the bunker and climb into your jeep.

STAGE 4: *RACE FOR THE FLAG*

Power up your jeep and zoom off into enemy territory. Bear in mind that the area should now be somewhat secure, and that your main worry comes from the enemy helicopters that randomly strafe your vehicle. Providing that your heavy vehicles have done the groundwork, there should be no problem from opposition fire. Remember the aquatic capabilities of your jeep (should the flag be located on a small island), but don't flounder in the middle of deep water with an enemy chopper homing in on you, or the flag is lost!



STAGE 5: *HOME FREE*

Once you've collected the flag, race back to base with extreme speed and nimble dexterity and Thunder Island is yours! These tactics work well for many of the other levels, but remember the strengths and weaknesses of all your vehicles. The method for exploring and finding flags on each level should follow these guidlines, but bear in mind that the later levels on Maps O' Death involve very careful thought. Keep these tactics up throughout the whole of this excellent expansion disc and all shall crumble at the might of your Return Fire prowess!









The Isle of Thunder is captured and the indigenous population celebrate by laying on a rather fine ticker-tape parade in your honour. What stout fellows. This video footage accompanies every victory.

LIGHT JEEP

ASSOCIATED MUSIC: ***RIMSKY-KORSAKOV - THE FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLE-BEE***



VEHICLE DATA
NUMBER AVAILABLE: ***8***
GRENADES: ***16***
NO OTHER WEAPONS

The speedy jeep is only to be used in unsecured areas in the direst of emergencies, as it has no armour and can withstand little enemy fire. The jeep has other advantages apart from the excellent speed in that it can transform into an amphibious vehicle (thus allowing you to cross dark blue areas of water). This is the only vehicle that can pick up a flag, so use them wisely. Also note that the jeep's handling is poor (especially at speed) and the grenades are largely ineffectual.

4x4 + anarchy = canyon shredding kill fest.



It's 26 levels of car-to-car combat. Customize buffed monster-stompers with trick engines and air-grabbing jump jets.





Hate cheesy acting? Watch two trash-talkin' jerks rip on the gratuitous video.



With our unique, head-to-head 2 player game, grind a pal's ego into the asphalt. It's cruel. But there ain't no 2nd place.

Get a load of Off-world Interceptor™ Extreme, the chaotic death-capade featuring wicked 4x4s and a blood-thirsty arsenal. Red-line across the galaxy's most intense, 32-bit texture-mapped terrain, switching on the fly between cockpit and chase view. Careful, though. Grabbing massive air could crush a kidney. Or two.



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X-MEN - Children of the Atom Head-to-Head Combat Action Game!!

ALL-NEW FEATURES DEBUT IN SATURN VERSION!

You just can't beat a bit of X-Men, can you? Well, Capcom would have us think just that, owing to their acquisition of the massive Marvel mutants license which resulted in this awesome Saturn fighting game.

The story so far: the game was due for a late September release in Japan, but the game was put back until November 22, during which time **MAXIMUM** was supplied with a seven character preview disc (see issue #2 for the first part of the Extended Play). At the time of writing, the game has just been released, but the plans for an immediate European release (along the lines of Street Fighter: The Movie, which was released in record time) have been scuppered by Acclaim, who have bought up the game for release on these shores. Despite the game being totally complete, it will not be available outside of Japan until "sometime in early 1996". This is pretty bad news,



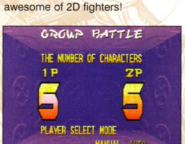
but we're so into the game that we decided to finish off our Extended Play coverage regardless.

Behold the arcade-perfect introduction sequence!



This month we're taking a look at the remaining characters in X-Men: Children of the Atom along with the extra features of the completed game, which Capcom have designed to give the game far longer lasting appeal. As you can see, we're also revealing the boss characters in all their glory - Juggernaut and Magneto are fully controllable... if you know the secret code. Which we don't at the moment, unfortunately.

Also, for details behind the genesis of this incredible Saturn title, check out the **MAXIMUM** inquisition, where we quiz the R&D masters behind this most awesome of 2D fighters!

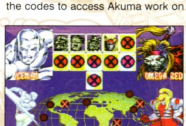




Ready yourself for X-Men Team Battle confrontations!

Capcom have a history of adding gameplay variations to their basic coin-op conversions - from Super NES Street Fighter II right through to 3DO Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Capcom have attempted to prolong the longevity of the solo player options as well as making it easier and more enjoyable for multiple participants. It should be noted that the codes to access Akuma work on all of the different game variations.





VERSUS MODE

Originally conceived by Capcom for the Super NES conversion of Street Fighter II, this is designed to offer two-player gaming at its most convenient. It's much like a series of two-player bouts in Arcade Mode, only the winning player isn't lumbered with the same character after his victory. Both players re-select their characters at the beginning of each bout. What is also nifty about Versus Mode is that if you've entered the code to play as Akuma you don't need to re-enter it after every bout.

For ultimate user-friendliness in the Versus Mode department, you really need to be able to access the hidden screen (shown below-left) which allows you instant trouble-free access to Akuma. This is the only way to access auto-guard Akuma, although the simple X-Attack commands don't work.

Three different X-gameplay variations are available. Common or garden Versus Mode (above), one-player Survival Mode (above right) and to the right you'll see the Short Cut Versus screen. To find this screen you need to press the shoulder L and R buttons when the CONTINUE message appears on-screen after a bout. This cuts out a lot of the loading and makes everything a lot simpler.



GROUP BATTLE MODE

This mode is clearly inspired by the King of Fighters series on the Neo Geo. Two players select a team of mutants and face off in a series of elimination bouts. Whoever is left standing at the end of the fight(s) is deemed the winner. It's as simple as that.

SURVIVAL MODE

This is the new solo-player option. Whereas the arcade mode only offers a series of bouts against selected opponents, Survival Mode takes you through all 13 fighters. The difference here is that each bout is decided with just one round and rather than regaining all of your energy at the beginning of each fight, you are allocated a limited amount of extra energy depending on your performance in the last round. Typically, the worse you did in the previous game, the more you are granted.

FIND THE HIDDEN STREET FIGHTER!!







Anybody who isn't too keen on Marvel characters is bound to be slightly upset by X-Men: Children of the Atom. However, those particular people should be heartened by the inclusion of Akuma in the game. Using a special cheat (revealed later), it's possible to access one of the most powerful Street Fighter II characters ever devised. All of the advantages Akuma possessed in Super Street Fighter II Turbo remain in full effect in X-Men: Children of the Atom. The vast majority of Akuma's attacks chain together, allowing players to pull off some of the most accomplished combination attacks imaginable - and it's all pretty easy, providing that you are familiar with the special moves (listed below). Awesome.

The legendary World Warrior makes a guest appearance!!

AKUMA

● *Real Name* **Akuma, or Gouki** ● *Height & Weight* **178 cm, 80 kg**
● *Eye Colour* **Red** ● *Hair Colour* **Red** ● *Origin* **Unknown**
● *First Appearance* **Super Street Fighter Turbo**





Notes Akuma's Japanese name (Gouki) roughly translated means "Supreme Demon" and he is the brother of Gouken, known to US and European gamers as Sheng Long - the martial arts master who taught Ryu and Ken of Street Fighter fame. In his pursuit of power, Akuma used his unparalleled skills to destroy his former master and used those same techniques to kill Gouken. Although he is fascinated for some undisclosed reason with Ryu's progress, he has taken time out from his vendetta to pursue the X-mutants. Although he has no special abilities or powers, Akuma is confident in his raw martial arts power - so confident in fact that he believes that he can kill any one who stands in his way - even the master of magnetism, Magneto!





Akuma takes on the unstoppable might of the Juggernaut! The Tornado Sky-Cleaving Leg (above) and the Sky-Cleaving Diving Kick (right).

ACCESSING AKUMA

A button press cheat is needed to successfully access Akuma. However, in a move clearly designed to confuse players, a different cheat is needed dependent on whether you are using the player one or player two position.

PLAYER ONE AKUMA

Move to Spiral and after counting steadily to three, move between: Silver Samurai, Psylocke, Colossus, Iceman, Colossus, Cyclops, Wolverine, Omega Red, finishing on Silver Samurai. Wait for three seconds, then press down simultaneously: short kick (button A), heavy punch (button Z) and roundhouse kick (button C).

PLAYER TWO AKUMA

Move to Storm and after counting steadily to three, move between: Cyclops, Colossus, Iceman, the Sentinel, Omega Red, Wolverine, Psylocke, Silver Samurai, finishing on Spiral. Wait for three seconds, then press down simultaneously: short kick (button A), heavy punch (button Z) and roundhouse kick (button C).

THE MARTIAL ARTS OF AKUMA	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
MIGHTY WAVE FIST	↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
MIGHTY RISING DRAGON FIST	→↓↘ + *Any Punch*
SCORCHING WAVE FIST	←↙↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
SKY-CLEAVING WAVE FIST	*Jump* ↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
TORNADO SKY-CLEAVING LEG	↓↙← + *Any Kick*
SKY-CLEAVING DIVING KICK	*Jump* ↓↘→ + *Any kick*
DEMON REVERSE	→↘↓↙← + *Any Punch*
TITAN'S SKY FLASH	→↓↘ *or* ←↓↙ + *P x 3 or K x 3*
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS	
DESTRUCTIVE MIGHTY WAVE FIST	↓↘→↓↘→ + *Any Punch button*
DESTRUCTIVE RISING DRAGON	↓↘→↓↘ + *Any Punch button*





A great example of Akuma's teleportation facilities (above left) along with an awesome example of Akuma's Destructive Rising Dragon super combo finish (that's above to the right).

MUTANT FILES - Secret data on each fighter's characteristics!

PSYLOCKE

- *Real Name* ***Elizabeth "Betsy" Braddock***
- *Height & Weight* ***5'11", 155 lbs*** ● *Eye Colour* ***Black***
- *Hair Colour* ***Black*** ● *Origin* ***Malden, England***
- *First Appearance* ***New Mutants Annual #2***





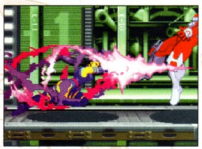


Notes Psylocke's history is one of the most convoluted in the entire X-Men series, which is quite surprising considering that she is one of the "later" characters to enroll in the mutant team supreme. Her origin is actually in Marvel UK comics, where she debuted as the sister of Captain Britain (and actually became Captain Britain at one point).

Psylocke's powers are telepathic in nature, with her being able to fire off psychic bolts and fry her opponents' minds with her psychic knife strike. In her original form, Psylocke wasn't much of an athlete, with little or no combat experience. However, this all changed when Spiral (working for Iron Man's arch foe - the Mandarin) combined Psylocke's mind and telepathic capabilities with ninja warrior Kwannon, which explains her current Japanese appearance.

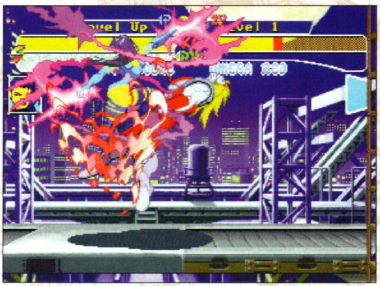
The combination of Psylocke's enviable mutant powers along with her ninjitsu training makes her arguably the most powerful character in the character. Although her special moves are limited, they offer a huge amount of combo potential and her speed is frankly unparalleled in the game (the dash feature comes into its own here).

Psionic powers and ninjitsu skills combine for ultimate effect!



Keep pressing all three punch buttons while using the Psi Thrust X-Attack for multiple strikes!









Above you get a good example of the Vector Theory inherent in X-Men. Each punch button produces a different direction for the blast.



PSYLOCKE HOME STAGE

MOON NIGHT – *MOONLIT DUEL*

Psylocke's telepathic and ninjitsu skills are put to work in this night-time scene. Starting out in a deep bunker, the battle begins on a scrolling platform on the 34th floor. The nearby scenery isn't strong enough to withstand the rampant power of the fighters' techniques, causing girders to buckle and disintegrate. After some time, the battle moves to the roof of the building, with a cityscape leading back as far as the eye can see.

THE MUTANT POWERS OF PSYLOCKE	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
PSI BLADE SPIN	↓↘→ + *Any Kick*
PSI FLASH	↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
NINJITSU	↓↙← + *Any Punch or Kick*
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS	
PSI THRUST	↓↘→ + *All three Punch buttons*

SPIRAL

- *Real Name* **Rita**
- *Height & Weight* **Unknown** ● *Eye Colour* **White**
- *Hair Colour* **White** ● *Origin* **Mojo World**
- *First Appearance* **Longshot Limited Series #3**





Notes Spiral is the creation of the sinister Mojo - an other-dimensional being who lives in a world dominated by television. Mojo sees the life or death missions of the X-Men as unparalleled entertainment and sought to improve his ratings by introducing some enemies of his own for the mutant heroes to battle against. Hence the arrival of Spiral.

Designed as the ultimate warrior, Spiral has six arms which she can use with equal ability. She wields weapons (mostly knives) with a dexterity that is magnificent to behold and is also adept at manipulating space/time, enabling her to teleport or switch position with her opponent as and when she chooses. Her X-Attack is one of the most dramatic in the entire game!

Although not a popular character at all, Spiral has all the makings of an extremely deadly fighter who backs up "gimmick" special moves with a dangerous style of play.





Master Spiral's unstoppable dimension-warping powers!



X-Men offers a huge amount of control over Spiral's blade-wielding antics. Once the blades are present, numerous throwing patterns are available for use.







SPIRAL HOME STAGE
MOJO WORLD – *AN EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL WORLD*

One of the most striking backdrops in the game - taking place in an altogether different dimension, Mojo World is also one of the most fragile. The platforms on which battle takes place frequently shatter and there are many different levels to the stage, meaning that it's never boring. The huge, bulbous creature grinning inanely is in actual fact a huge effigy of the evil, sadistic Mojo, here displaying his rampant egomania for all to see.

THE MUTANT POWERS OF SPIRAL	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
DANCING SWORDS	➡↘⬇↙⬅ + All three Punch
THROW DANCING SWORDS	Press Heavy Punch repeatedly
SWORD TOSS	⬇↘➡ + Any Punch button
SIX-HAND GRAPPLE	⬆⬇ + Any Punch button
LEVEL 2 X-POWERS	
SWORD EXPLOSION	⬇↘➡ + Any Kick
DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Any button
POWER DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Light Kick
SPEED DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Middle Kick
DIMENSIONAL DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Heavy Kick
SWITCH DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Light Punch
TELEPORT DANCE	⬇↙⬅ + Middle Punch
RAPID DESCENT	⬇↙⬅ + Heavy Punch
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS	
METAMORPHOSIS	⬇↘➡ + All Punch then throw



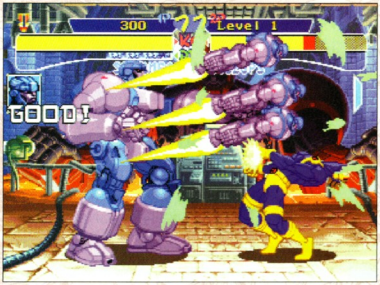
Spiral's spectacular super attack! Rapidly changing between all of the characters in the game (save Akuma), Spiral unleashes terrifying amounts of damage on all her opponents! It's a difficult move to successfully execute, though.







Gasp at Spiral's incredible X-Power!!





Worried at the lack of Sentinel special moves? Don't be! The armoured warrior robot has a range of basic attacks which are just as spectacular as some of the special mutant techniques that the other characters use. Laser beams and missiles are just two of the non-special attacks on offer.





SENTINEL

● *Real Name* **None** ● *Height & Weight* **Varies by design** ● *Eye Colour* **None** ● *Hair Colour* **None**
● *Origin* **Currently manufactured in Genosha** ● *First Appearance* **X-Men #14**



Notes The Sentinels were one of the most powerful threats the X-Men ever faced in the early days of their career, although their danger quickly diminished as the mutant heroes seemed to be fighting them almost constantly. These days, Sentinels (even the new Nimrod class) are easily despatched. The Sentinel in the X-Men game is a new model designed to counter every one of the X-Men's capabilities. It is a lot smaller than the Sentinels seen in the comics, but it is packed with a huge range of weaponry almost undreamt of in the original series.



The Sentinel's special attacks are many and varied, with the likes of missiles, mini-robots and flying offensives in its repertoire. However, potential Sentinel players should not underplay the importance of the machine's basic attacks - these are every bit as unpredictable and ingenious as the specials. The only real weakness the Sentinel has is a vulnerability to low attacks, especially in the hands of the CPU player.

Security breached! All mutants must be neutralised!!







SENTINEL HOME STAGE

GENOSHA – *THE GENOSHA TRAP*

The Sentinel's base of operations is a secret facility hidden on the mutant-enslaving island of Genosha. From here, most of the oppressive measures taken against mutants are instigated, including the construction of the Sentinels. The manufacturing process is overseen by a Sentinel known as Master Mold, whose electronic brain schemes for mastery of the world - even at the expense of the human scientists and politicians who created it.





Even after the move has been input, it's possible to add extra power to the Sentinel's powerful X-Attack

THE MUTANT POWERS OF SENTINEL		
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES		
ROCKET PUNCH	↓↘→	*+ Any Punch*
SENTINEL FORCE	↓↘→	*+ Any Kick*
FLYING	↓↙←	*+ All three Punch buttons*
BODY PRESS	↓	*+ Heavy Punch*
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS		
PLASMA STORM	↓↘→	*+ All three Punch buttons*

STORM

● *Real Name* ***Ororo Munroe*** ● *Height & Weight* ***5'11", 127 lbs***
● *Eye Colour* ***White*** ● *Hair Colour* ***White***
● *Origin* ***New York*** ● *First Appearance* ***Giant Size X-Men #1***



Notes Before realising that she was in fact a mutant, Storm enjoyed the life of an African Goddess, bestowing blessings on the native farmers of Kenya by controlling the weather for them. Therein lies her mutant skills, for Ororo is able to summon typhoons, rain, ice and lightning whenever she chooses. Her control of the wind is so advanced that she uses it to fly, manipulating the wind-currents to support her weight.

In the game, Storm specialises in fireball-style attacks (namely the Typhoon) along with her speed. Thanks to her wind manipulation, she hovers for the duration of the fight, adding the swiftness of the air to her already impressive speed. For combination enthusiasts, her lightning storm super finish is a dream come true.

Master hidden Hyper-X Hail Storm attacks for maximum damage!







STORM HOME STAGE
ON THE BLACKBIRD – *PREFLIGHT BATTLE*

The Blackbird is the X-Men's customised jet aircraft capable of super-sonic speeds. It's often lamented by the X-Men that they're the only mutant team not to have teleport capabilities, but the Blackbird jets are extremely fast and have limited space-faring prowess. On this stage, the battle takes place on the roof of the aircraft which is immensely sturdy. Unlike many of the other stages, there is only one level to the proceedings, but background details include a steady progression from twilight to night.



Summon the elements to eliminate your enemies!







Storm's mastery of the elements enables you to use wind to draw in or repel her opponents. Here, Colossus is drawn in before being mercilessly bombarded with Storm's powerful wind-aided kicks.

THE MUTANT POWERS OF STORM	
SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	
TYPHOON	↓↘→ + *Any Punch*
LIGHTNING ATTACK	*Same strength Punch and Kick*
FLYING	↓↙← + *All three Punch buttons*
GUST OF WIND	↓↙← *or* ↓↘→ + *All Kicks*
MAX LEVEL X-POWERS	
LIGHTNING STORM	↓↘→ + *All three Punch buttons*
HAIL STORM	↓↘→ + *Start*

SUPER VILLAINS - Preview of the toughest mutant masters the World has ever seen!!



Once you have defeated a selection of the game's characters in battle, two more X-Enemies arrive to wreak havoc. The Juggernaut and Magneto are two of the most powerful foes the X-Men have ever faced. Magneto's mutant powers of magnetic mastery allows him a huge scope of attacks designed to surprise - and then destroy you! Juggernaut relies on his own so-called invulnerability and bludgeoning prowess to get the job done. **MAXIMUM** can reveal that both characters can be player-controlled. And we'll be revealing how along with a full range of their attacks in the next issue.

JUGGERNAUT - I'M UNSTOPPABLE!

Prepare to be flattened by the incredible JUGGERNAUT HEADCRUSH!



Juggernaut stands with Akuma, Spiral and the Sentinel in that he isn't actually a mutant at all - even though he is the half-brother of Charles Xavier - reputedly, the most powerful mutant mind on Earth. He gained his powers by seizing the crimson ruby of Cytorrak, which transformed him into a huge, virtually unstoppable power-house - distinguished by the fact that he is one of the only mortal beings in existence to withstand the bludgeoning power of the Incredible Hulk.

Juggernaut's immense size and unstoppable attacks make him a deadly opponent, although in the game, his bulkiness is a disadvantage, and he's easily taken down by Cyclops.





First in a series of CAPCOM R&D INTERVIEWS MAXIMUM expose X-Men development data!



Tatsuya Minami is one of the men responsible for bringing coin-op hits like X-Men, Street Fighter Alpha and Darkstalkers onto the home next generation platforms.

During the **MAXIMUM** trip to the Shoshinkai show this month, we took time out to visit the Japanese headquarters of Capcom to talk to the creators of Sega Saturn X-Men: Children of the Atom. Situated in Shinjuku in Tokyo, the HQ we visited is in actual fact just one of the bases owned by Capcom and is dedicated solely to marketing, hence a huge display in the lobby showing the gargantuan array of Capcom merchandising available (and extremely popular) in Japan.

All research and development is carried out in a separate base of operations located in Osaka. We spoke to Tatsuya Minami, Senior Manager of the Product Planning and Design Section of the Consumer Game Department who travelled over to Tokyo to talk to us. He gave us a fascinating insight into the processes behind what is without a doubt one of the greatest fighting games available on any home system. Here's a complete, unabridged account of our discussions...

MAXIMUM How did you choose which X-Men you wanted for the Children of the Atom coin-op?

Mr Minami On the whole we had a certain strategy for choosing possible candidates. Out of those we selected as candidates, we went for the characters which could be brought out easily and those which could be used easily against others. There are also some which although easy to use were struck off because they did not work in the game.

MAXIMUM Which ones were they?

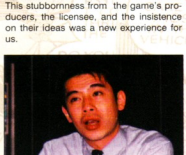
Mr Minami For reasons concerning our connection with Marvel, I can't say.

MAXIMUM What research went into the production of the Saturn conversion of X-Men?

Mr Minami Firstly we researched the Saturn market to see what extent the users would take note of the X-Men subject matter. We also looked at the level of awareness generated by X-Men in the arcades and decided from there whether or not a conversion would be suitable.

MAXIMUM Let's move on to the characters themselves. Take Wolverine for example - how did you understand how he moved and how did you animate him in the game? What materials did you use which allowed you to get a feel for how he should move?

Mr Minami This is difficult! There is a comic version of Wolverine and Marvel itself had ideas on how he moves. When transferring this to the game, we had firm opinions on how to bring him to life, which we discussed with Marvel. It didn't always go well and a for a long time there were some fierce debates. But eventually, after much explaining, we got them to agree to how the character should move. This stubbornness from the game's producers, the licensee, and the insistence on their ideas was a new experience for us.



"We looked at the level of awareness generated by X-Men in the arcades and decided from there whether or not a conversion would be suitable."





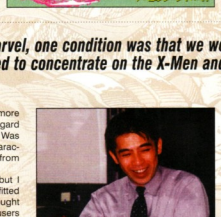


MAGNETO - YOU DARE RISE AGAINST ME?

Only the strongest heroes can withstand the power of the MAGNETIC SHOCKWAVE!

Eric Lensherr grew up with oppression, watching his family die in the Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War. He sees the current victimisation of mutants as being too similar to the persecution of ethnic minorities during the war and has vowed to use his powers to defend his race. Magneto sees war between humans and mutants as becoming increasingly inevitable, and he truly believes that his huge array of magnetic powers can bring about the end of humanity.

That might sound far-fetched, until you see Magneto in action during this game! His mastery of anything metal allows him to concentrate iron molecules around your body with but a thought, or he can just summon up great chunks of debris to fire at you. His powers also allow for a powerful shield and razor-sharp magnetic bolts, making him the undisputed master of the mutant race - and the X-Men's deadliest enemy!



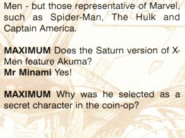


"In the contract with Marvel, one condition was that we would include one character from Street Fighter. We wanted to concentrate on the X-Men and didn't want to use Ryu or Ken, so we settled on Akuma."

MAXIMUM Did any character cause more problems than any of the others in regard to translating him into the game? Was Wolverine the most complicated character with regard to co-operation from Marvel?
Mr Minami They were all difficult, but I think from the image aspect, they all fitted our image of how they should be brought to life. In particular, the overseas users would have their own views on the X-Men characters and we did worry about showing them as they would be imagined.

MAXIMUM Our staff includes a big Marvel fan and there were no complaints at all about the authenticity of the characters. You've taken four of the X-Men - Psylocke, Wolverine, Magneto and the Juggernaut into Marvel Super Heroes. Why was that? Were these four the most popular?
Mr Minami These four characters appeared in the Infinity Gauntlet comics. However, after all of our research, these four stood out relatively as very popular characters, so we had them appear [in Marvel Super Heroes].

MAXIMUM The Infinity Gauntlet featured a huge amount of Marvel heroes - just about all of them, in fact. How did you go



about selecting which ones you were going to use?
Mr Minami We went for those characters with the most impact - those most suitable for an action game. Then, of course, there were Marvel's wishes [to take into account]. This time we wanted to use really famous characters - not just the X-Men - but those representative of Marvel, such as Spider-Man, The Hulk and Captain America.

MAXIMUM Does the Saturn version of X-Men feature Akuma?
Mr Minami Yes!

MAXIMUM Why was he selected as a secret character in the coin-op?
Mr Minami In the contract with Marvel, one condition was that we would include one character from Street Fighter to include with the X-Men. We wanted to concentrate on the X-Men and didn't want to use either Ryu or Ken, so we settled on Gouki [Akuma].

MAXIMUM We've heard that Akuma is hidden in Marvel Super Heroes, along with another secret guest star. Is this true?
Mr Minami One is Gouki...

MAXIMUM Is the other Ryu?
Mr Minami Probably... This information has not even been released in Japan yet.

MAXIMUM What are the main differences between the arcade and Saturn versions? Are there some things you were disappointed you couldn't do?
Mr Minami Yes there are. However, on the plus side we put in original modes for the consumer version. In the arcades, players just put in 100 yen for a short game, so we put in a long-playing mode. On the minus side, we had problems with the Saturn hardware. There is only two megabytes of memory for loading into. This is true not just with the Saturn but for all of the CD-ROM machines, like the 3DO and the PlayStation... Converting games like X-Men and DarkStalkers is difficult because a lot of RAM is required. X-Men has 32 megabytes just for character data, meaning that we have to compress it when ideally we'd like to double it.

MAXIMUM Does that mean that future conversions will be even harder? For example Marvel Super Heroes is an even more complicated game than X-Men. Does this mean that as you develop more powerful coin-ops, the conversions will be less similar?
Mr Minami We will make an effort.

MAXIMUM Are there any additions to the Saturn version? Obviously the most important question regards whether you are able to play as the bosses - Magneto and the Juggernaut?
Mr Minami There is a secret mode, but this is confidential at the moment.

MAXIMUM When will it be announced?
Mr Minami It's not such a difficult thing to find - after a week or so, people will find it.

MAXIMUM So it's similar to accessing Akuma...?
Mr Minami Yes...

SS
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2
AVAILABLE SOON ON UK OUT IT NOW





IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF GAMEPLAY AND FEATURES

What is the greatest Sega Saturn game in existence? The answer is remarkably obvious - AM2's Virtua Fighter 2 is by far and away the best fighting game around, and its technical achievements and gameplay make it the most awesome Saturn game available today. And hey, even the PAL conversion's cool as well!

Last month, we printed a basic overview of Virtua Fighter 2's new features; this issue we go into the new gameplay features behind VF. We examine the extra realism AM2 have grafted into their latest fighting game and we probe deeply into the roots of combination attacks. And also, as promised in the last issue, we finish off our basic character profiles. This month, Kage, Sarah, Shun, Wolf and Lau are exposed in true **MAXIMUM** style.

For any one in doubt about the power of Virtua Fighter 2, we direct you with all due haste to page 140, where the game is reviewed. How close a conversion is it? Is *everything* from the coin-op in it? Is the sound really as awful as everyone on the Internet says it is? Rely on **MAXIMUM** for totally impartial criticism on the most important release in the Saturn's history.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - What is it that makes this the greatest game ever?



- *PAL conversion tested! Full details and first PAL review in this issue!*
- *Saturn-specific features improve the VF package still further!*

A decent PAL conversion can make or break a fighting game - witness Tekken, which although good on PAL is somewhat lacking when compared to the arcade and NTSC PlayStation versions.

MAXIMUM has now played a complete PAL conversion of Saturn Virtua Fighter 2 and it must be said that AM2 have performed miracles in their conversion. There are huge PAL borders on the player select screens, but once you are into the game proper, prepare to be amazed. The borders are reduced to an absolute minimum and amazingly, all (and we mean all) of the speed of the NTSC game has been converted across perfectly. Timing is all-important when it comes to combination attacks and again, this is exactly as it should be. Usually, the speed of the product is immediately noticeable as being slower when viewing any PAL conversion, but the conversion work here is so good, it's extremely difficult to tell any difference whatsoever.

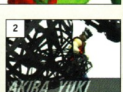
In version 2.0, it is possible to hit your opponent with a kick and then use the guard button to retract the kick - even after it's hit. Version 2.1 redresses this.

The only slight downer is the fact that there are the borders on the select screen (which shows what we could have been lumbered with no PAL optimisation), but where it counts, Virtua Fighter 2 remains an uncanny conversion. So, it's hats off to AM2 for treating European fans with as much respect as their Japanese brethren.



THE TIMING OF VIRTUA FIGHTER

Virtua Fighter runs at twice the speed update of its predecessor, clocking in at a mighty 60 frames a second, if you own the NTSC version (that's an update of 0.012 seconds). The execution of special moves is calculated by performing the various button motions within a specified number of frames per move. For example, Akira's Stun Palm of Doom manoeuvre gives you a full 60 frames to execute its three component parts (that's one entire second), whilst his knee attack gives a lot less. It's activated with K+G followed by another quick G. When we say quick, we mean one frame quick! Moves which are quite flexible in their timing can be performed at different speeds. Taking Akira as an example again, his dashing body check (B-F-F-P+K) can be performed at various speeds. By taking more time over the F-F part of the move, Akira can be made to charge at a greater distance. So, the timing of moves is highly important.





Just like Virtua Cop, VF2 features an all-new intro sequence which boasts some excellent FMV. Each character morphs from VF1 flat polygons into VF2 textured finery and performs their trademark moves on a wireframe rendition of Dural.







ANALYSIS OF ATTACKS

It's important to grasp the way the attacking system works in Virtua Fighter 2, if you are going to master the subtle art of the counter-attack. Every single offensive strike in VF can be split into three distinct sections.

1. Attack Generation

This is the event of initiating the attack - be it just by pressing the kick button or entering B-F-F-P+K for Akira's dashing body check special move, for example. During this time, you are quite vulnerable and an opponent can counter by producing an attack that's quicker to execute than yours (often you will see a move stopped cold by a simple punch).

2. Continuous Attacking Power

This part of the attack usually lasts between two and five frames - and unless your opponent has timed his attack to hit you *at exactly the same time* you should hit and be invulnerable at the same time.

3. Recovery Time

This is the most critical part of your attack. After the destructive force of the attack has been unleashed, your character needs some recovery time before he/she can attack again. It's particularly lengthy after special attacks - again, Akira's specials are some of the longest, although Jeffry and Wolf are well known for their prolonged attack recovery times. Instinctively knowing the recovery time of each attack is essential in mastering VF2's combination attack system.

INTRODUCING AXIS MOVEMENT

Virtua Fighter has been criticised as being a 2D beat 'em up in 3D clothing - something we take issue with vehemently. Perhaps it could be argued that it was lacking something in VF1, but in the sequel, all manner of spins and avoidance tactics make use of the third dimension. Foremost amongst them in this regard are Lion and Shun - the two newcomers.

Both of them feature Axis Movement commands, which enable them to dodge out of the way from an incoming attack and then counter-strike. Using the G button in combination with diagonal down/forward or down/away performs the necessary moves. In Virtua Fighter 2, the characters dodge 30 degrees around and can still be tagged by a throw or combination. This brings the usefulness of the attacks down considerably. This has been remedied in the superior version 2.1, which increases the range





Lion's axis movement is demonstrated above on a perplexed Kage-Maru. The trick here is to save the movement for when your opponent is performing a special move that takes a while to execute. The attack misses and Lion can immediately counter-strike.





of the Axis Movement to a more wholesome 45 degrees and does not allow opponents to turn towards Shun or Lion mid-attack. This makes using the newcomers a lot more satisfying in version 2.1.









Another new feature of Virtua Fighter 2 is the ability to effectively "stagger" the opponent – stunning them for just a moment in order to get in another "free" attack. Again, Akira is the best example when it comes to the stagger, as a great many of his pushes, shoves and kicks send the opponent reeling. There are three different staggers, each lasting a different length of time. Characters such as Akira and Lion are best served by staggering their opponents (the mid-kick (DF-K) is particularly effective at this) and then following up with a special move.

1. Light Stagger

Jacky's spinning punch and beat knuckle produce this mildly off-balancing attack. Maybe you can get in a free punch or two, but otherwise, it's nothing to write home about.

2. Medium Stagger

Performing the mid-kick on a crouching opponent produces the medium stagger - a staple move for the CPU-controlled Lion. From here, a PK combo or dash throw can usually be executed.

3. Severe Stagger

Usually the preserve of Akira alone, this stagger takes some time to recover from, during which decent players will have unleashed a devastating combination on your sorry posterior.

Game refinements take Virtua Fighter beyond anything around today!









Reversals enable you to get out of cheesy P+G throws. Some characters perform them better than others, but nearly always, the fighter performing the reversal is left in a superior position, enabling them to re-seize the initiative and perform a particularly memorable combination strike. Sarah (above) performs a particularly speedy reversal.

THROW REVERSALS

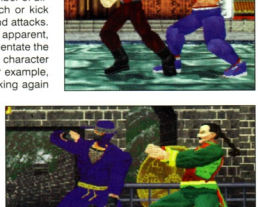
Everyone knows how to do P+G throws. Just waltz in close and press P+G for instant results. Every fighter has such a throw and they're all cheesy. Luckily, you can reverse these throws by pressing P+G together at exactly the same time as your opponent - and what's more, this also puts you in a position to attack without mercy. If you're playing a cheesy opponent, it's best to instinctively press down P+G for every combination attack or special move that is blocked. The most effective abuse of your recovery time is to throw quickly and pressing P+G is the means to that end.

Throw reversals are a new VF2 feature which is expanded upon in the Saturn conversion. Examine the Watch Mode and you may notice that some characters can actually achieve throw-reversals on non-cheesy moves such as Splash Mountain. Expect to learn these moves shortly.

REVERSE ATTACKS

These attacks are limited to the following characters: Lion, Shun, Jacky, Sarah and Kage. By pressing back twice followed by either punch or kick, the chosen fighter turns his/her back on the opponent and from here, a number of different attacks are possible. The next time a punch or kick button is pressed, the fighter turns back around and attacks. The advantages of these attacks are not readily apparent, although in a two-player bout, it can serve to disorientate the opponent. It's best to practise with your chosen character and see what attacks you can string together. For example, initiating Sarah's reverse with a kick and then kicking again can produce a pretty effective floating two-hit combination which has plenty of range. One word of warning to potential users of the reverse: the CPU Jeffry seems to dodge all attacks of this type with ease and almost always retaliates with his fearsome back-breaker. Stick to conventional mid-level attacks and don't try to be *too* clever.





POUNCE EXPANSION

This is another area of Virtua Fighter 2 which has been expanded a great deal since the first game. In the preceding game, everyone had moves to pulverise prone opponents, but only Akira and Pai had quick punches which could incur extra damage on foes who were quick to



In Virtua Fighter 2.1, some of Jacky's mini-bugs have been corrected, such as retracting kicks hitting. However, the beat knuckle (above) remains just as effective as ever.

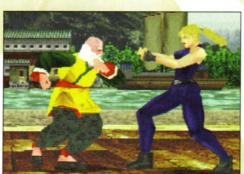
rise. In Virtua Fighter 2, *everyone* save Lion and Shun now has such an attack, and it's activated with down/forward and either punch or kick depending on the character chosen. Refer to the appropriate character profile for full information.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 CENSORED! OR IS IT?

If you have access to the Internet, you'll see that a huge amount of controversy is currently in the offing thanks to minor differences between the Japanese, American and European versions of the game. Basically it all amounts to Shun Di's heavy drinking activities.

For some bizarre reason in the USA and European versions, there is no visual indication of Shun getting progressively more drunk. In the Japanese game, every time Shun takes a swig from his bottle, his skin turns ever-so-slightly redder, resulting in a crimson visage being evident by the end of the bout. Shun's extra drinking allows him to access more effective special moves and increases the power of his attacks. The changing skin tone is the only change - contrary to what is on the 'Net, Shun retains his extra power and special moves and his bottle is still very much in evidence.

The question has to be, why bother with the change? Surely it would have saved AM2 time in converting everything over lock, stock and barrel. It looks like being one of those strange mysteries for the files of Arthur C Clarke...









These pictures of the drunk Shun (notice his red skin) are of the Japanese version of VF2.

ALL-NEW GAME COMPLETION SCREENS NOW ADDED!

As well as including the game completion sequence from the arcade version (which featured replays of all your bouts, with ghosting effects on the animation), Virtua Fighter 2 also includes game completion "Congratulations!" screens to admire. There are two screens per character, with the screen you get dependent on the clothes you were wearing when you finished the game. If you wish to access you fighter's alternative clothing (the "away strip" as it were - which is often better looking than the default look), simply press and hold up when you are selecting your character.

WHAT IS VIRTUA FIGHTER 2.1?

You've read the reviews - you've seen everyone go crazy about the fact that Saturn VF2 features an additional conversion of pseudo-sequel Virtua Fighter 2.1 - but has any one actually told you what it is all about? Answer: No. Well, this is the total full-on list of changes made to the game once 2.1 is selected. To tell the truth, you'd have to be pretty masterful at the game to notice the difference, but it does make for much more exciting battles at a fundamental level, particularly for Lion and Shun players.

Special thanks go out from **MAXIMUM** to Joji Suzuki for the most in-depth 2.1 analysis ever seen! Small changes have been made to each character in addition to this list, but we simply haven't got room to list all of them. Basically what it boils down to is some moves being longer to recover from whilst other attacks (particularly throws and counters) are easier to execute. For more exciting battles, **MAXIMUM** recommends immediate graduation to version 2.1!





Two small examples of the tweaks made to the gameplay of Virtua Fighter 2.1 - in the picture above, Pai is attempting multiple back dashes (which cannot be "buffered" as in version 2.0), whilst to the right, we're trying to show that a PK combination doesn't deck your opponent - merely stagger him.

1. No more multiple back dashes!

An easy, cheesy way for the fast characters to dodge out of battle in 2.0 is to constantly dodge backwards with multiple back dashes, which you can "buffer". This is no longer the case in 2.1. Additionally, if you are hit when back-dashing, you stagger, leaving you momentarily vulnerable to attack.

2. Cheesy PK knock-downs no longer work!

For some of the more aggressive combo-orientated characters, a quick PK combo was an easy way to score a knock-down, leaving the opponent open to a pounce. This no longer works. A PK from Lau, Shun, Lion or Pai causes the opponent to stagger, but the recovery time is so long that it cannot be strung into a combo.

3. Recover from staggering blows!

In a move to shake out from stagger-based combinations, players can hold down the guard button and waggle the d-pad left and right to regain control and disrupt possible combos from the likes of Lion, Kage and Lau.







Compare the numbers in the corner to the appropriate text to learn the full meaning of the changes made for Virtua Fighter 2.1.





These small refinements may not seem like much, but when all combined together, they totally change the balance of power for some of the characters, providing a far more even and exciting game. Switch to 2.1 immediately!

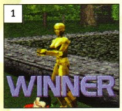


Game refinements take Virtua Fighter beyond anything around today!

4. Dash ranges altered!
In version 2.0, when you run at an opponent, you stopped three metres in front of them. For 2.1, this has been reduced to one-and-a-half metres, meaning that throw-based characters like Wolf and Jeffry can dash 'n' throw!

5. Kick timing changed!
In Virtua Fighter 2.0 it's possible to retract kicks once you've executed them. In fact, Akira and Jacky can retract the kick even when it has connected, meaning no recovery time! The time allowed for retraction has been cut down by a third and the aforementioned characters can no longer kick and retract.

6. Self knock-downs punished!
Characters like Shun and Jeffry who can initiate moves that end up with them prone on the ground are penalised. If an opponent pounces on them after these voluntary knock-downs, the damage is 1.75 times larger.



7. Minor counters inflict less damage!
Pretty much speaks for itself really - this is only a very small change which most people are unlikely to notice.

8. Axis moves are now actually useful!
Shun and Lion have dodges that allegedly allow them to dodge past attacks and counter - these are called Axis Attacks. In version 2.0, the characters only dodge 30 degrees, and opponents can correct their stance and still successfully throw. In 2.1, both characters now dodge 45 degrees around their opponent, enabling them to dodge PPPK combos and immediately counter-strike!



CONTROL DURAL!

The Saturn version of Virtua Fighter 2 enables you to control Dural in much the same way as VF1. However, this time there are TWO Dural codes, each of which provides you with a J6 Syndicate robot with a different paint job! Dural has been kitted out with a huge range of moves, so it's best to try out as many of the other characters' moves as possible. Dural also has one all-new move which nobody else in the game possesses - it's an airborne kick activated with F-F-K+G.



SILVER DURAL
Press Down, Up, Right, A+Left for the Silver Dural you encounter at the end of the game.

GOLDEN DURAL
Press Down, Up, Left, A+Right together for the golden version of the Dural J6 robot.



LOCATE THE HIDDEN OPTIONS SCREEN!

This hidden option screen is pretty much an open secret - what you need to do is complete the game on Expert Mode to trigger the appearance of these selectables. It doesn't matter how many continues you use in completing Expert Mode, it always appears once Dural has been defeated. A helpful tip is to attempt Expert Mode on your very first game. This is the mode that uses your best tactics against you, so it's logical to assume that if you haven't contributed to the CPU's intelligence, it will be very easy to defeat. For the easiest possible route through (the cheesiest in other words), use Sarah, Pai or Lion and consistently use P+G throws on your opponents. Even Dural should pose no problem here. Just make sure nobody's watching or forever be tormented for your lack of VF2 skills!

To find the options screen, select OPTIONS on the main menu and press the shoulder R button twice.

NEXT MONTH

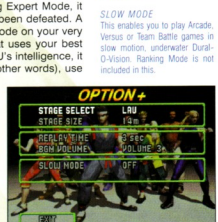
The top-notch Virtua Fighter 2 coverage continues apace! With basic techniques out of the way, we go in-depth on each character, probing their combination potential in ways you can only dream about. How does a *thirteen*-hit Lau combination strike you? Or indeed a six-hit Jeffry destroyer? We have VF2 techniques to make your play up there with the gods! Only **MAXIMUM** has the answers along with the complete moves list to end them all!

STAGE SELECT
This enables you to start in Arcade Mode where ever you want from the beginning stage (Lau) right through to the slow-motion loveliness of Dural's underwater home.

RING SIZE
Choose from a variety of different sizes, right through from four metres (sudden death size) right through to the enormous "Tekken Emulator" 42 metres!

REPLAY TIME
The default for this is three seconds. You can either double it to six seconds or replay the entire round. Expect a variety of stunning camera angles on the latter two options.

SLOW MODE
This enables you to play Arcade, Versus or Team Battle games in slow motion, underwater Dural-O-Vision. Ranking Mode is not included in this.



SARAH BRYANT

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Character Profile



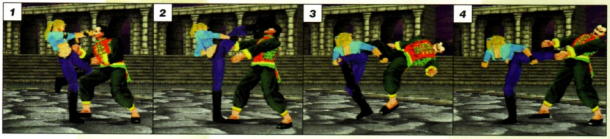
● **COUNTRY** USA ● **SEX** FEMALE ● **BIRTHDAY** JULY 4 ● **AGE** 21
● **BLOOD TYPE** AB ● **HEIGHT** 173 cm ● **WEIGHT** 55 kg ● **FIGHTING STYLE** JEET KUNE DO
● **JOB** COLLEGE STUDENT ● **HOBBY** SKY DIVING

Sarah is inquisitive by nature, and sought to find out the full truth behind the "accident" that temporarily crippled her brother Jacky in the 1990 Indy 500 race. The trail led her to the J6 Syndicate, who abducted her. Through a process of painful brainwashing, the Syndicate turned her against Jacky and used her innate fighting abilities to turn her into the fastest, deadliest fighter alive. Her mission to kill Jacky in the first Virtua Fighter tournament failed, although she become the runner-up in the first competition behind Lau Chan.

In the interim period between the two Virtua Fighter contests, Sarah Bryant has remained in the mental thrall of the J6 Syndicate, who once again wish her to kill her own brother in the VF tournament. Although her fighting skills were formidable in the first game, Sarah is now even more powerful. Her speed rivals Pai's and Lion's, and her sheer aggression makes her one of the most powerful fighters in the game.

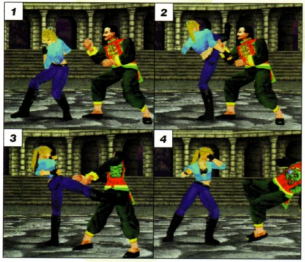
In Virtua Fighter 2, Sarah relies greatly on her new range of kicks; her punches are generally only used to initiate her powerful combinations, which have been refined and improved upon since the first tournament. Although her skills remain somewhat mechanical and predictable, you can't argue with results - completing the game is achieved with most ease by mastering Sarah.





SEQUENCE ABOVE LEFT - From a crouching position, enter B-K-K to pull off two stunning-looking reverse kicks - you can string it into a simple combo by instead of crouching, press D-K and then entering the command. Follow up with D, K-K for two more forward kicks.

SEQUENCE BELOW LEFT- Speaking of D, K-K, here it is in action. This now starts with a high kick followed by a mid-kick, attacking at two different heights and having a very successful hit ratio and plenty of range.

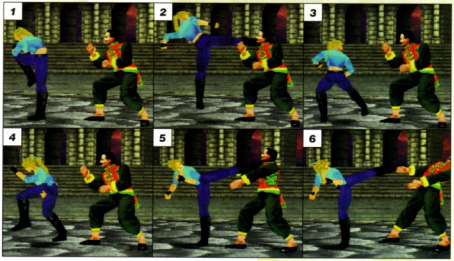


WINNING QUOTES

Better run home to momma now!

Even good guys blow it sometimes [laughs]

Yahoo!



SEQUENCE ABOVE - A power roundhouse kick was something that Sarah lacked in Virtua Fighter, and something that was immediately remedied in VF2. K+G activates this long range attack, although if you miss, you're very vulnerable.

SEQUENCE RIGHT - Initiate Sarah's reverse mode with B-B-K or B-B-P. This paves the way for many surprise kicks - something Sarah's very good at.

LOSING QUOTES

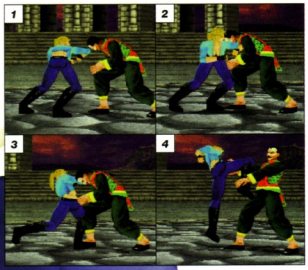
Fancy being beaten by this fellow!

I still want to fight!





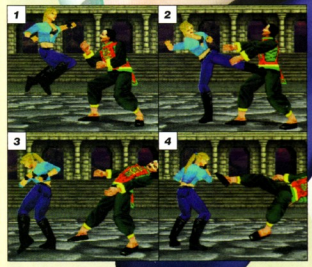




SEQUENCE TOP - B-K initiates this two-hit kick that is excellent at close range. It tends to faze the CPU player sometimes.

SEQUENCE MIDDLE - DF-K on a prone opponent unleashes Sarah's "penalty kick", which looks exceptionally vicious. It doesn't inflict too much damage, but certainly looks the part.

SEQUENCE ABOVE - F-P-K produces Sarah's elbow knee combination that's a lot faster now - follow-up with a kickflip.







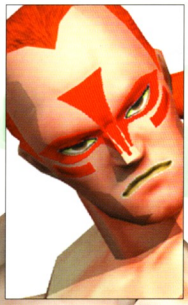
SEQUENCE ABOVE - Sarah's kick quotient reaches stratospheric levels. This kick (U-K) tends to confuse human opponents and can attack at range (use UF-K).

SEQUENCE RIGHT - Both of Sarah's P+G throws from in front and behind return in VF2 along with F-F-P (which isn't pictured). Otherwise no new throws whatsoever, which is the only down-point about Sarah's triumphant return.

WOLF HAWKFIELD

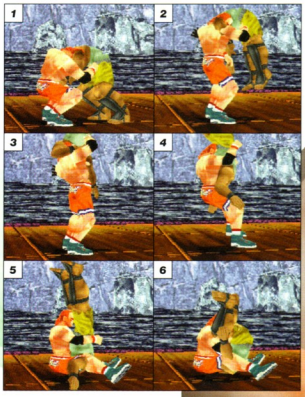
VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Character Profile

● **COUNTRY** CANADA ● **SEX** MALE ● **BIRTHDAY** FEBRUARY 8 ● **AGE** 28
● **BLOOD TYPE** O ● **HEIGHT** 181 cm ● **WEIGHT** 110 kg ● **FIGHTING STYLE** PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING
● **JOB** WRESTLER ● **HOBBY** KARAOKE



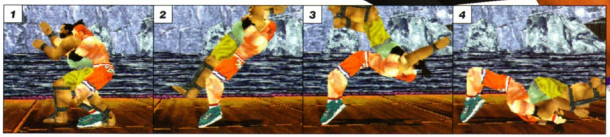
Before the first Virtua Fighter tournament, Wolf was a hunter - a man who lived in the Canadian woodlands, living off the land. This was until he was discovered by a wrestling scout, who realised that Wolf's incredible physique and combat prowess would make him a great hit in the pro-wrestling arena. Several months on and Wolf became the undisputed world champion, easily beating off all challengers to his numerous titles. This dissatisfaction with the level of competition forced him to enter the first VF tournament which resulted in humiliation. He was easily taken down by Akira Yuki and he has spent the last year improving his strength, speed and techniques. Now, as the second tournament is announced, he feels ready to try again.

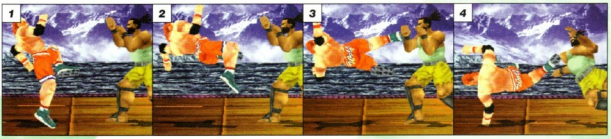
Any one can see that in terms of size, he's absolutely huge - just like Jeffry he is far larger than he was in the first VF tournament. He's also kitted out with a range of new moves, which are actually activated in similar ways to his throws. This means that if you do not successfully execute a throw, there is a good chance that one of his best close-range attacks will strike home. Although his punches do not seem as versatile as Jeffry's, do not discount him. Wolf's advantage lies in range - although he's great at throws and some close-range attacks, his sheer size means he is just as good at ranged attacks. A powerful fighter, but his dream of defeating Akira is likely to end in disaster...



SEQUENCE ABOVE - Splash Mountain is now a Jeffry-exclusive move, with the DF-DF-P + K throw now being handed over to this particularly vicious attack.

SEQUENCE BELOW - Wolf's throw from behind has now been changed. Although it looks very similar to the move seen in VF1, it's now executed with P + K + G together instead of the basic P + G manoeuvre.





SEQUENCE LEFT - An all-new kick from Wolf - activated with B-F-K+G. Great at long range.

SEQUENCE DOWN - This new Wolf kick is similar to a new Sarah move - produce it with F-K+G to attack an opponent's mid-section.

WINNING QUOTES

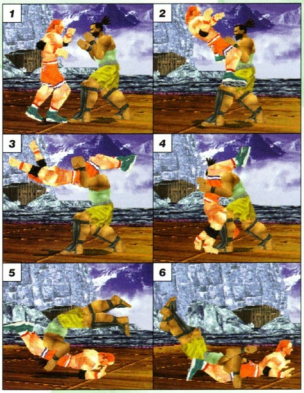
Come back again in about a year!

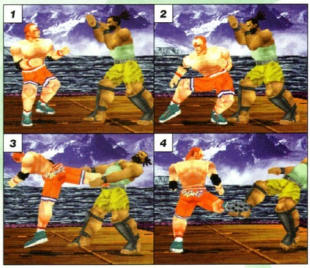
Oh to picture you winning [laughs]!

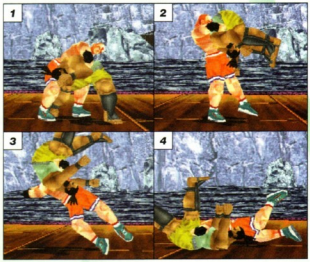
SEQUENCE RIGHT- UF-K causes Wolf to launch himself onto his opponent's shoulders and hoist them over. An unexpected new technique from the Wolfster. Great stuff.

SEQUENCE BOTTOM RIGHT - D-P+G is yet another new throw in Wolf's gargantuan wrestling arsenal.









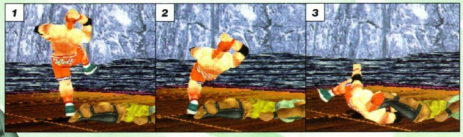
LOSING QUOTES

So... There was someone stronger then me...

One more time... Just once more I want to fight!







SEQUENCE ABOVE - Wolf has a counter to defeat those pesky mid-kicks that always foxed him the first game. Use DB-P for this excellent manoeuvre.

SEQUENCE LEFT - Now even has more attacks for a prone opponent. If you want to score some damage on a foe who is quick to rise, use DF-P to launch this particularly impressive falling elbow strike.

KAGE-MARU

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Character Profile



● **COUNTRY** JAPAN ● **SEX** MALE ● **BIRTHDAY** JUNE 6 ● **AGE** 24
● **BLOOD TYPE** B ● **HEIGHT** 178 cm ● **WEIGHT** 66 kg ● **FIGHTING STYLE** JUJITSU
● **JOB** NINJA ● **HOBBY** MAHJONG

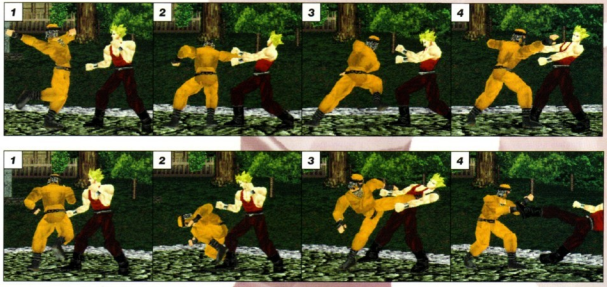
Kage is tenth generation Kage-Maru of the Hagakure clan, who was forced into bitter revenge when one day he returned home to discover that his village had been razed to the ground. His mother was kidnapped and his father died before him as he was felled by an assassin's bullet. Kage is determined to find the culprits and wreak a terrible vengeance. He quickly discovers that the organisation behind these acts is the J6 Syndicate, who were eager to add the fighting secrets of Kage's ancestors to their already huge fighting knowledge. In fact, many rumours suggest that the Dural robot is based around Kage's abducted mother and its moves in VF1 do suggest a similarity in style.

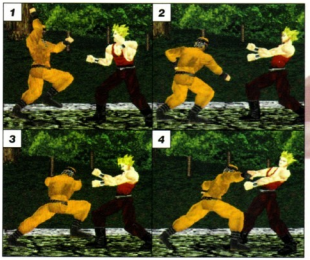
Like Akira, Kage has been radically upgraded since his first appearance in VF1. Although he is still viewed by some as being something of a good all-rounder with a move for all occasions, in actual fact, he's best suited to range attacks, as he can attack at many different heights and thus confuse his enemies. In terms of combination strikes, he's a bit useful. Although he has a kickflip combo, it is one of the weakest in the game, best used in conjunction with the infamous B-P ten-foot toss.

Players may find him difficult to get the hang of, but rest assured, it's even more difficult for his opponents to get to grips with his unique style.

SEQUENCE RIGHT - Use B-F-P+K for the first move and another P+K for the reverse swipe. An all-new Kage attack!

SEQUENCE BELOW RIGHT - Kage is decked out with a bewilderingly vast array of new attacks, including some new kicks. First and foremost among them is this new strike, activated with B-K+G. Again, this is a Kage attack that is good at a fair old range, often clipping opponents attempting to deck him with a PPPK combination attack.

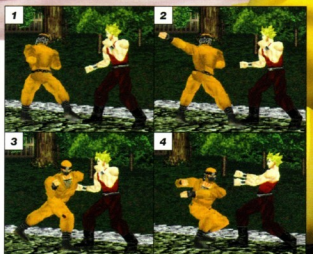




WINNING QUOTES

Unfit!

Not enough training!
Dear Buddha...!
[Translated from Japanese]



SEQUENCE ABOVE- A variation on the double swipe manoeuvre. The first swipe is produced with D-F-P+K, with the second move (pictures three and four) activated with P+K.

SEQUENCE RIGHT - A mid-level swipe from the swipe-meister himself- Kage. use D-P+K to initiate this particular attack, which is good for breaking through combinations.

SEQUENCES BELOW - Two three picture sequences, showing how Kage can access both kinds of kick-flip in VF2. BU-K activates the top flip (the same as in VF1) whilst the bottom sequence shows a move initiated with BU-K+G. Both moves have their own specific advantages.

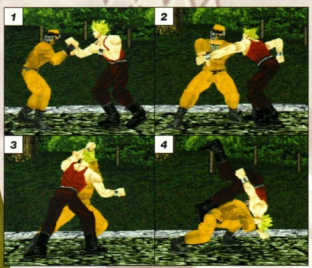




LOSING QUOTES

Well, goodbye then...!

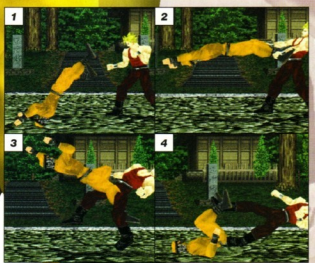
I must not cry!
[Translated from Japanese]

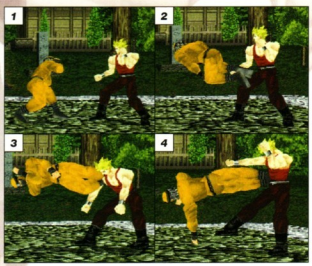


SEQUENCE LEFT - Kage has a counter that is especially effective against combination-orientated characters. Simply press D-P to turn an attack against your opponent. Simple but very effective.

SEQUENCE BOTTOM LEFT - The old F-F-P+G+K attack from VF1 remains as irritating as ever to Kage's foes.

SEQUENCE BELOW - An all-new corkscrew attack that is extremely effective against human opponents, being very unpredictable. Use F-F-K+G to produce this deadly attack.





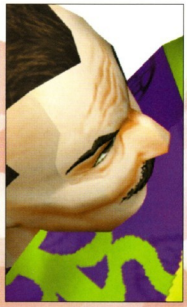
SEQUENCE RIGHT - PK combos are cheap but often effective ways to strike. P-G-K provides a PK combo more effective than others in that attacks on two

SEQUENCE RIGHT - PK combos are cheap but often effective ways to strike. P-G-K provides a PK combo more effective than others in that attacks on two

LAU CHAN

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Character Profile

● **COUNTRY** CHINA ● **SEX** MALE ● **BIRTHDAY** OCTOBER 2 ● **AGE** 54
● **BLOOD TYPE** B ● **HEIGHT** 172 cm ● **WEIGHT** 77 kg ● **FIGHTING STYLE** LOEN-KEN
● **JOB** COOK ● **HOBBY** CHINESE POETRY



Lau is flushed with victory after having defeated all-comers and securing the Virtua Fighter tournament. Despite powerful challenges from his daughter Pai and the particularly troublesome Sarah Bryant, Lau Chan's combination attacking skills proved to be the undoing of his opponents. His winning of the title enabled him to take over as master at his martial arts school, but even this was not enough for him and he retreated to the mountains, seeking to develop his killing techniques still further. The invitation to participate in the second Virtua Fighter tournament reaches him just as he completes his training. Seeking to pit his advanced Koen-Ken techniques against the world again, Lau leaves his sanctuary and prepares to do battle!

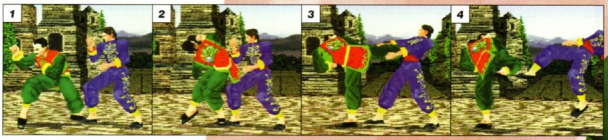
Anyone hoping for a radical change in Lau's style is likely to be disappointed. His skill lies in scooping up an opponent into the air and then unleashing a torrent of punches, which he can finish off in whatever way he desires. In terms of combination prowess, Lau is unrivalled - expert players might be aware of his frankly stunning 13-hit combo, the biggest in the game.

The only problems Lau is likely to face come from counter-attacking foes such as Pai, Akira and Kage. He relies so heavily on initiating attacks with running punches that this leaves him extremely vulnerable to counters - Akira in particular has the power to take him down with relative ease.



SEQUENCE RIGHT - BD-P + K produces this all-new Lau throw, which easily decks an opponent, but doesn't really inflict that much damage. Still, its speed and ease of use does make a fairly worthwhile technique to have in your Lau arsenal - and its novelty value is pretty special.

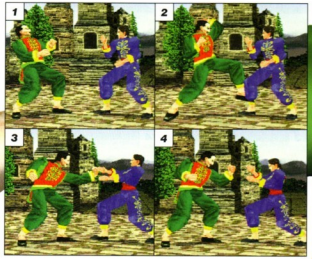
SEQUENCE RIGHT - A lot of Lau's strikes are derived from his basic attacks, which are some of the most powerful out of all of the Virtua Fighters. This powerful kick is initiated by crouching and as you rise, hitting the kick button. This technique can be preceded by a punch and does score a particularly strong knock-down. Useful.

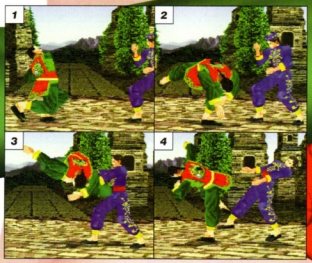


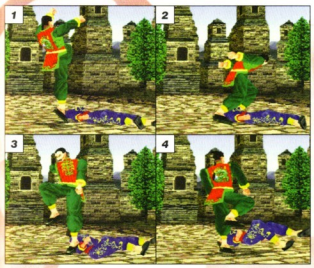
WINNING QUOTES

I should have a few more little tricks!

I haven't put in enough training!
[Translated from Japanese]









SEQUENCE FAR LEFT - A new, quick stomp for Lau on prone opponents - quick to rise. Simply use DF-K for this great looking attack.

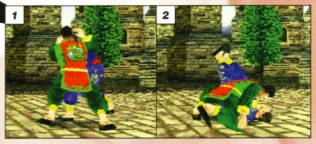
SEQUENCE LEFT - new Lau techniques are pretty thin on the ground - this spinning lower kick is executed with F-D-K and is similar to the low Kage sweep in that does tend to catch people as they fall. A useful, although not particularly spectacular new kick.

LOSING QUOTES

How awful to lose to one so young!

Next time, this certainly won't happen!









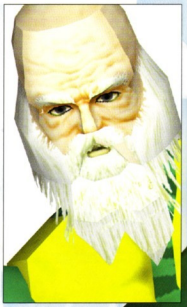
SEQUENCES ABOVE - Three different sequences that prove that Lau has still got all of his old throws from Virtua Fighter. Use the middle throw (F-B-P) for the occasional cheap ring-out. Sneaky.

SEQUENCE LEFT - Lau's true power is still derived from the huge array of PPPK combinations and variants at his command. Pictured is the PP-B-K combination which is now a lot easier to execute.

SHUN DI

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Character Profile

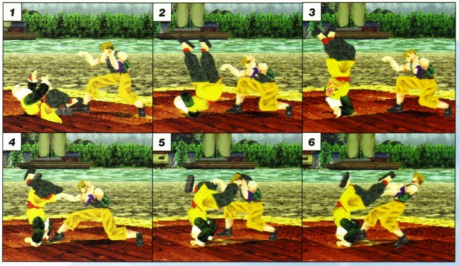
● **COUNTRY** CHINA ● **SEX** MALE ● **BIRTHDAY** JANUARY 2 ● **AGE** 82
● **BLOOD TYPE** O ● **HEIGHT** 164 cm ● **WEIGHT** 63 kg ● **FIGHTING STYLE** DRUNKEN KUNG FU
● **JOB** HERBAL DOCTOR ● **HOBBY** DRINKING



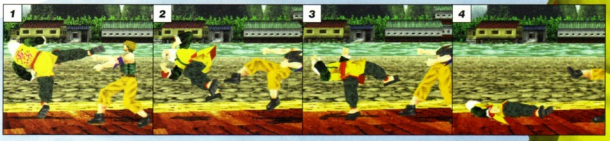
This unassuming little man with the drinking problem doesn't look like much to many people. However, in actual fact he runs one of the toughest, most gruelling martial arts training halls in North China and many of the world's greatest fighters owe a great deal of their success to Shun. These days, he doesn't train that often, but while drinking with his other elderly martial arts teachers, he learns of the success enjoyed by one of their students: Akira Yuki. On a whim, he suddenly decides to enter the second Virtua Fighter tournament, despite the advice of his peers.

Shun's great strength is his sheer unpredictability - nobody can effectively guess what the old guy's next move will be simply because it's possible for him to move smoothly between one technique and the next without any delay. He also manages to pull off many different moves that are effectively mini-counter attacks. This is down to his size a lot of the time (he can punch *under* his opponent's punches), but it's well worth getting to know the full repertoire of Shun's attacks.

For a competitor that's seemingly impossible to seriously consider, Shun is something of a surprise - great against other human challengers, but not so hot against the CPU player.

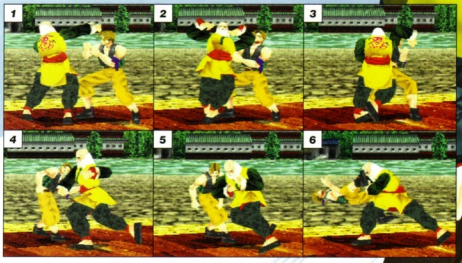


SEQUENCE LEFT - A half circle movement from front to rear enables Shun to perform a hand-stand - use K to attack. A very amusing move, but one that experienced players will have no problem countering. Good novelty value, but not very useful.



SEQUENCE ABOVE - A nice Shun attack here produced with DB-DB-K. Very powerful, but Shun is vulnerable if the attack is blocked or dodged.

SEQUENCE RIGHT - Shun has an excellent P+G throw, which inflicts multiple hits on his opponent. Unfortunately, Shun drinks after this move which allows his opponent plenty of time to get off the ground, so not much pounce potential there.

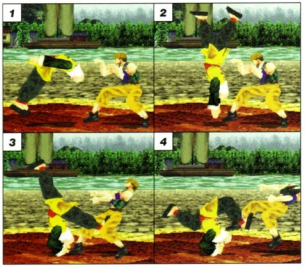


EXTENDED PLAY

SEQUENCE LEFT - A special D-D-F-P combination strike.

SEQUENCE BELOW - Use D-K+G for this hand-stand kick.



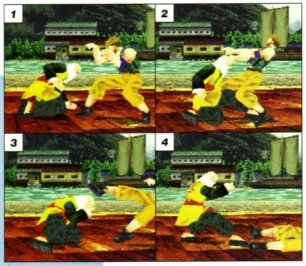


WINNING QUOTES

However fast you are, you can't win!

[Translated from Japanese]



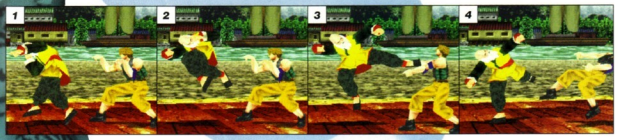


LOSING QUOTES

Next time, be more gentle!

[Translated from Japanese]





SEQUENCE TOP - D-P+K produces this sweep - in the Japanese version, drinking improves the attack and you can follow-up with more F+Ks.

SEQUENCE TOP-LEFT - A great cart-wheel kick that's extremely useful and very powerful - F-F-K produces this excellent move.

SEQUENCE LEFT - A smart kick, activated with U-K.

SEQUENCE BELOW LEFT - An extremely simple kick, produced easily by pressing K+G. Quite spectacular for the old timer.



 TEKKEN 2 VER.B ARTWORK © NAMCO 1994, 1995 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



Tekken 2 Ver.B recieves limited release in selected arcades around the country!

characters' abilities. King (the all too proficient wrestler) in particular has been noticeably toned-down, whilst the sub-bosses themselves have a greater variety of moves. But the most exciting news of all concerns the playable bosses; as both Armor King and Wang are initially selectable, with more bosses being added after a time-delay.

Other differences include a change to the title screen. In the previous version, Kazuya's looming visage appeared after a certain combination had been inputted, but now the title screen is available from the start, as are the words 'Ver B' on all the demonstration bouts and main title. This is what you should check for to ensure that you're playing the enhanced version of Tekken 2. The final cosmetic change occurs during the fight itself, as the mark indicating the bout wins have changed from red to green, and this leads to a clear indication of who is winning after the first round.

The game system itself has undergone a slight overhaul, but this has been mainly confined to changes in the way characters are damaged after a flooring. When attacking a prone character, any damage causes the victim to bounce lightly whether they are lying face down or face up. With careful timing, a downed character can rise from a flooring almost immediately (leading to a quick and more intense combat), compared to the lengthy wait endured by the victim in the first Tekken 2 incarnation whilst a number of extra (and mostly cheap) hits occurred. Be warned that characters getting up are susceptible to normal attacks that result in a heavy bounce, but with expert timing, a master combatant may shrug off a pummelling to surprise a foe.

MAXIMUM's comprehensive Tekken 2 guide continues, and in this final instalment we detail another five diverse characters as well as offering further snippets of information on all manner of interesting features that this game has in abundance. The biggest new facts we have concern the upgrade which has superseded the first version after only two and a half months. This new version features a number of tweaks and more subtle changes, including the upgrading of controls and the levelling of unbalanced

ROGER and ALEX enter the arena! Fierce combatants from the animal world!

Despite his appearance, Alex is best described as a hybrid of King and Heihachi, sharing many moves and throws with those two characters.





Although he is another member of the animal kingdom, Roger is nigh-on identical in every way to the lizard-like Alex, sharing all of the same moves and techniques. Any differences are aesthetic only.







The two animals that infrequently appear during the fourth round of some demonstration bouts are Roger the Kangaroo and Alex the Dinosaur, and they are now available to play! These odd-looking critters are the hidden characters in the game and are based on a King-style fighter, but with shorter arms and longer legs. Despite the similarity between the animals and King, the actual execution of the moves feels very different, and in Version B, the elbowing moves have been weakened. Roger and Alex are still a considerable force to be reckoned with, and in the right hands, they can prove to be the deadliest of foes. Instead of relying on their short ineffectual punches, a basic combat strategy should be to use the 'Animal Dash' in close quarter fighting, and finish with the 'Kurukuru' (or spinning) punch.

TAILING YOUR OPPONENTS

Both Roger and Alex have benefited from acquiring two separate tail-based attacks; known as 'Tail Cutters'. These are new, unique and amusing manoeuvres and produce different effects depending on the the timing of the attack. Ordinarily, the tail sweep to the side and is quite difficult to hit with, but coupled with a sprint it can inflict heavy amounts of damage. Simply knock your opponent to the floor, and run up to the prone body before executing the tail cutter which now points downwards, hitting the enemy with great ease.

OTHER ANIMAL ANTICS

Being cursed with stunted forearms, these two animals find throwing extremely difficult, but make up for this with devastating routing abilities. There are numerous ways to achieve such a technique (such as the Heihachi-inspired uppercut), but **MAXIMUM**'s personal favourite is a right punch following a trample which sends the foe skyward with great force, and is known as the 'Itsufuu-shinken' (False Wind Divine Fist). Once the floating has started, time three linked air moves or a normal one-two punch and finish with a knee drop for a hugely damaging link technique. One last unique technique was the damage-inflicting 'Animal Rush'. After wounding your enemy with a drop kick, try for a running stomp attack that crushes mercilessly, but remember to escape any counterattack with a backwards roll (by pulling back on the joystick). Finally, remember any key techniques when playing as King (and to a lesser extent, Heihachi) and use them with Roger the Lizard, or Alex the boxing Kangaroo.

PAUL



THIS YANKEE JUDO STAR IS ONE TOUGH DUDE!

The severe retraining programme started by Paul soon after his defeat at the hands of the youngest Mishima mauler has paid off considerable dividends, as Paul appears with numerous additions to his Judo-based attacks. His jobs as a street fighter and bouncer have earned him respect and attention throughout the United States, but now he must turn to the second Iron Fist tournament for some serious fighting action. From now on, the fights he is involved in are with real combat masters; and not the frankly pathetic lumbering fools encountered in downtown bars, clubs and back-streets.

Paul now has a trademark explosion for all his big hits - a massive ball of bright orange lightning accompanies his finest connecting moves. Aside from this flamboyant and superficial touch, his actual extra moves include a great number of floating techniques (using mainly kicks), some new throws and a couple of fantastic Judo-inspired counters.



PAUL'S TECHNIQUES

Triple Kick Combo - The king of the two-step kick is back, and this time he has some variations to this theme. As you can see from the moves list, Paul's Tile Breaker combos are divided into three, and the reason for this is simple. The first two moves are identical in all of these techniques, but the third kick can be varied so that it hits high, medium or low. What this essentially entails is that an enemy character must be very sure of their blocking style with Paul attempting a final kick of any level. Therefore, should Paul miss with the first two kicks, he may regain some credibility with a stunning final kick that could be the start of a floating combo. Also bear in mind that the high kick hits with much greater force than the mid or low kicks.



Jaw Breaker - The first part of a two-part combo that can be finished with either the Gut Buster (below) or the Stone Breaker. The damage caused by this mid-range face smash is fair, but the main benefit of this attack is the additional damage you can follow up with. The Gut Buster is the most damaging of the two techniques but is easier to block.

"I DON'T CARE HOW TOUGH YOU ARE. I CAN SMASH YOUR FACE IN A SECOND IF YOU MESS WITH ME"

Gut Buster - The name says it all; this is a two-stage mid-range punch to finish the technique which has excellent wounding capabilities. Also of more superficial merit is the great stomping movements that Paul makes, but when used in play, this makes a good offensive posture that shows the enemy that you mean business. The second successful hit smashes into the foe with such force that they are sent flying across the fighting arena. There is no time for floating combos here; continue your aggression with a sliding move or pounce.





Stone Breaker - The alternative to the Gut Buster to finish the Jaw Breaker combo is the Stone Breaker; and this is the most visually impressive of the lot. After the initial heavy punch to the gut, Paul hits low with his right fist, and succeeds in launching the enemy upwards. Excellent to watch, this has the added benefit of 'floating' the enemy, which can lead to more pulverising action at the hands of an expert Paul Phoenix player. The second hit strikes low and is hard to counter should the opponent block the first blow .

Seotoshi (Back Drop) - Paul's reverse throw inflicts the most damage of any (except the Wind Claws), but the movement is remarkably similar to Bruce's (and Wang's) own version. This throw is obviously attempted on a backward-facing opponent, and Paul can continue the carnage with a number of sweeps or perhaps a pounce.





Fuuga (Wind Claws) - Another throw to Paul's already comprehensive repertoire of Judo techniques has been added. Despite being slightly trickier to pull of, the Wind Claws causes greater injury than either the Back Strike or the Comma Throw.







Thousand Dragon King Fist - Paul's new Guard Impossible deals death expertly and looks fantastic, and has the added bonus of being simple to execute. As with all unblockable techniques, there is a sizable time delay between the start of the Thousand Dragon King Fist and the actual power-punch hitting home, but the results are well worth it. Overcome any timing difficulties you may have and Paul squats slightly, bathed in a burning circle of magical fire, before unleashing fiery destruction on a bewildered foe. This is a burning fist that none of your opponents will forget.



Ultimate Tackle Technique - Paul has the added bonus of being able to pummel helpless victims on the ground, and this should appeal to any vindictive Tekken 2 player who has had to sit through another player's 'cheap' tactics once too often. Paul starts with an unblockable take-down (the Ultimate Tackle) that actually causes some damage, before choosing his next attack carefully.

Random Black Cloud and Black Cloud Strangle - By frantic button tapping, Paul sits over the helpless foe and pummels away at the victim's face whilst he or she struggles ineffectually. The five punches do moderate damage, but these pail when compared to the awesome destructive power of the Strangle variant. True Tekken 2 expertise causes the now psychotic Paul to punch the victim as normal, before suddenly reaching for their throat with glee! After a brief tussle, the victim is left choking and gasping for breath while an amused Mr Phoenix swiftly jumps to his feet, ready to dish out more punishment.

PAUL'S COUNTERING MOVES

In addition to his vast range of throws, Paul Phoenix has the added bonus of being able to counter an opponent's attack in a variety of swift professional Judo styles. Four take-downs are available and all are essentially the same button combination with various damage ratings depending on the attack.

Kaeshi-gi (Return Moves) - The four take downs vary depending on the level of the opposing hit and whether the enemy is using punches or kicks. The actual method of take-down varies only very slightly between high and mid-range attacks, so the main counters may be grouped into two main counters; those for punches, and those for kicks.





PAUL'S FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

BRAIN-TAKING REVERSE CROSS	Near opponent
SINGLE BACK THROW	Near opponent
COMA THROW	Near opponent
BACK STRIKE	Near opponent
ONE, TWO PUNCH	
SHREDDER	
PHOENIX SMASHER	
PK COMBO	
PDK COMBO	
BONE BREAKER	While crouching
NEUTRON BOMB	
JAW BREAKER	While crouching
ROCK-SPLITTER	While crouching
HIGH THREE TREASURE DRAGON	
TRIPLE KICK COMBO	
TILE-BREAKER	While crouching
TILE-BREAKER DESTRUCTIVE FIST	While crouching
HANG OVER	While crouching
GUT BUSTER	While crouching
FLASH ELBOW	
WIND CLAWS	Near opponent
STONE BREAKER	
BACK DROP	From behind or
THOUSAND DRAGON KING FIST	
1. ULTIMATE TACKLE	
RANDOM BLACK CLOUD	During 1.
BLACK CLOUD STRANGLE	During 1.
REVERSE PDK COMBO	
QUICK PK COMBO	While going forward
RETURN MOVES	Depending on attack or

PAUL'S SUB-BOSS IS

KUMA THE BEAR

● ***AGE*** - *22-26 in human years!* ● ***WEIGHT*** - *210 kg* ● ***HEIGHT*** - *280 cm* ● ***BLOOD GROUP*** - *?*

Kuma the 'mad bear' was an abandoned pup that Heihachi hand-raised from infancy. When Kuma grew to unmanageable proportions, Heihachi taught him simple commands, and expanded upon these until Kuma could comprehend a rudimentary form of Japanese. After this, Kuma was trained as a fighter in the Heihachi school of martial arts; learning 'Kuma Shinken'. No one has been able to fathom why Kuma is so intelligent; indeed some have showed fear at the amount of information Kuma seems to understand, especially as his favourite food is human flesh.

Heihachi's pet is undyingly loyal to his master, but prone to bouts of intense slumber (even during the summer months) that has meant an imprecise and disjointed fighting prowess. This was demonstrated in the first Iron Fist tournament when he was defeated by Paul Phoenix. Before their confrontation, Kuma only believed that there was one strong human in the world, but his humiliation at the hands of Paul has proved that there is another. When Heihachi was also defeated, they both travelled to a remote mountain hideaway where they retrained ferociously with each other, and Kuma learned to control his lethargy. He has now returned to the second competition with one intention; to defeat Paul. Anyone who attempts to bar his path will be eaten.





BRUCE



THAILAND'S GREATEST KICKBOXING MAULER

"WHO DARES CHALLENGE MY POWER! MY MASTERY OF MUAI THAI MAKES ME UNSTOPPABLE!"

Bruce is another Tekken 2 sub-boss that benefits from being a totally original character with a uniquely distinctive style all of his own. Enraged by past tragedies and the dogged determination of Lei Wulong's trailing activities, Bruce has turned this anger into the perfection of his Muai Thai skills, and has become a powerful-striking combat machine. Bruce's technique and entire attacking style of play relies on strong strikes that really hit home, and are mostly knee or thigh based due to Bruce's reliance on the Muai Thai style of play.

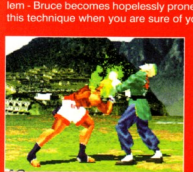
Use Bruce's strength to your advantage by inflicting a series of hard-hitting knee or kick-based attacks on an unsure enemy, and Bruce's many three stage low attacks are perfect for this. Couple these stringing knee and kick attacks, with Bruce's expert grappling holds (including the phenomenal grappling combo known as the Knee Hell) and you have a unique, fascinating and very strong combatant with an unnerving presence.

The other real strength of Bruce lies in his ability to toggle between low or mid-level kicks, and the choice of extra moves after two initial kicks. The beginning one-two leaves you with the possibility of linking a Rising Combination to the two moves, or even the Northern Light or Southern Cross Combinations. With expert joypad waggling, try two low kicks and rise to a jumping right kick and a Left Upper with a final throw to finish. Remember that these techniques get easier with practice!

Bruce's only deficiency is his lack of low level attacks, and so the temptation is to use cheap throws, so try to learn his ultimate grappling combo as quickly as you can. In the mean time, strike with low side kicks and high kicks, and reserve mid-level footwork for crouching enemies.

BRUCE'S TECHNIQUES

Triple Tae-Fork and Elbowing - This is more of a pointer that an actual manoeuvre, but is usual to know nevertheless. Elbows should be used exclusively when a foe stalls during a technique. When you see such a falter (usually between two different punches or kicks), use this to your advantage by quickly employing a powerful set of moves. Use the Triple Tae-sork as one method of attack; and this works particularly well as Bruce steps forward on the first hit, leading to a long reach and the chance of flooring a foe, or even floating them. This is a great counter-attack, but suffers from one major problem - Bruce becomes hopelessly prone when the enemy guards - so only use this technique when you are sure of your timing.



Mid-air Combos - There are four different techniques that Bruce may employ that launches an opponent high into the air, and all of these are excellent for starting the many floating combos that Tekken 2 is famous for. What all these techniques have in common is a reliance on kneeing, and this is the point to remember; when attempting mid-air combos (or constructing your own) you should always use a kneeing manoeuvre as this floats a foe with ease. Use any of the three-hit combos listed, but for extra accuracy, try the Triple Knee Combo.

Triple Knee Combo - Almost all of Bruce's three-stage combos use kicking attacks, but the Triple Knee Combo inflicts the most damage and should be the technique to use from Bruce's selection. Although it employs a leaping knee attack exclusively (and indeed is the only combo to do so), this right, left, right kneeing action is quick and hard-hitting, and is the technique to master before any of the less damaging combos should be attempted. The only real drawback of this technique is the height of the hits (all three strike the midriff), so the moves can be blocked if your timing is off. Once you've

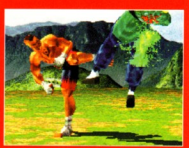




mastered the basics of this technique, employ it in a floating combo (see above) by timing the start of the technique just as your opponent falls back to earth. This causes extra and crippling damage to a prone and lifeless opponent who has no chance to avoid Bruce's unstoppable power!

Side Low and Side High Kick - Although these two kicks don't have the sheer force of Bruce's main combos, they have a specific use; being ideal for inflicting follow-up attacks on a grounded opponent in the process of getting to his feet. in a similar manner to the Dragon Low and High Kicks of Law. Strike with the low hit, and the high one should be attempted. Be wary of an attacker rising quickly on the spot; the two kicks are useless in this situation and it is far better to attempt a right uppercut or other mid-level hits instead.





Stopping Knee Feint - This is the most damaging of all Bruce's feint techniques, and as the name suggests, it comes into play when your opposing player is employing some cunning tactics. Used to interrupt an opponent's technique in the manner of a counter-strike, the knee can hit with such force that it can cause a stumble; and now is the time to follow-up with a massive combination of your own choosing! The Stopping Knee Feint is ideal for executing a short distance away as it benefits from a slight range, and can startle a previously confident enemy.

Leg Bazooka - The two different forms that this move takes results in the same display of legwork. Familiarise yourself with the move as it is tricky to perform, but has the benefit of stunning a foe. Strike with speed and the opponent crumbles under the strength of the attack, but try and coax your foe into blocking and a stun could occur.











Tornado Upper - The second part of Bruce's Cyclone combo is a rising uppercut of ultimate destruction that inflicts terrible blows to an unwary enemy. The advantage of this move is the utter carnage it creates, with your foe ending up sprawling and broken on the ground. The drawback is the expert timing needed to hit with this uppercut, as it is notoriously difficult to connect perfectly.

Back Fling - The Bruce Irvin throw from behind is one of his most damaging. Once negotiated, the enemy is quickly grabbed and twisted over Bruce's shoulder in a similar style to Wang's (and Baek's) reverse throw, inflicting significant amounts of spinal damage to the now prone fighter.

Sidewinder - Bruce's Guard Impossible is a powerful Chi release with a hugely damaging finish. After a build-up of mental energy (which is shown graphically as dancing purple sparks), Bruce uncrosses his arms and dashes forward from his defensive posture with a crippling mid-blow that causes massive internal injuries. While this transforms a previously buoyant foe into a crumpled heap, the Sidewinder isn't nearly as damaging as Law's Dragon Slash, so don't rely on it to finish off a wounded combatant.

BRUCE'S GRAPPLING COMBOS

Once the many knee and kick-based attacks have been accomplished with some degree of success, try your hand at some of Bruce's most spectacular moves. Whilst not quite as visually stunning as King's wrestling grips, Bruce's grabs are faster and still look excellent. Wow the crowds with your Bruce Irvin prowess by trying either of these two combos.

Kubi-Nage Head Throw - The first of Bruce's two linking grappling combinations is by far the easiest to perform. Firstly, execute the Front Right Knee Kick, which as the name suggests is a swift kneeing to the opponent's stomach after a brief struggling grapple. Bruce's swiftness and strength is channelled into this quick tussle followed by the second portion of his combo - the Head Throw itself. As usual, time your second throw straight after your first, and providing you're quick enough, this leads to Bruce launching into a rather unpleasant head-grabbing manoeuvre that inflicts heavy damage.









EXTENDED PLAY

Knee Hell - This is Bruce's finest hour (and his ultimate secret technique) - another unbelievable series of killer moves that result in a totally demolished opponent. The only problem here are the lightning reflexes needed for the four separate grapples; but the results are well worth it. Bruce firstly tries the Front Right Knee Kick (explained above), followed by another type of grapple; the Left Side Knee Kick (or the Right-hand variant), where Bruce struggles with a panicking opponent before swinging them round and kneeing them again. Where this differs to the original Knee Kick is that the hit crumples the side of the character, and thus leaves them vulnerable to further damage from Bruce's third linked kick-boxing strike; the Spinning Right Knee Kick. This third attack may be attempted again (thus severely damaging the victim), but this is very difficult to time correctly, so try just the one spin until you feel comfortable. Either way, this is a well-placed rotating kneeing that the opponent can do little about, except to pray for the hurting to stop. Obviously the Gods of combat aren't listening, as Bruce shows little regard for fighting honour and finishes his deadly combo with a hugely-damaging Vacuum Flying Knee Kick. Finally, remember to use Bruce's cries of "Ha!" to time your grabbing. The crippling attacks (especially the last one) drain huge amounts of energy from the hapless enemies, and with the necessary skill you can crush foes without them having time to even think of retaliation.

BRUCE'S FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

HIZA-JIGOKU - KNEE HELL	*Multi-knee throw combo*
1. FRONT RIGHT KNEE KICK	*Near opponent* ➡⬇↘ 🔴🔴
2. LEFT SIDE KNEE KICK	*During 1.* 🔴🔴
3. SPINNING RIGHT KNEE KICK	*During 2.* 🔴🔴
4. VACUUM FLYING KNEE KICK	*During 3.* 🔴🔴
KUBI-NAGE - HEAD THROW	*During 1.* 🔴🔴🔴🔴
THAI-KOW-KOHN	*Near opponent* 🔴
THAI-KOW-TORON	*Near opponent* 🔴
LEG BAZOOKA	➡➡ 🔴
FORK CLUB	➡ 🔴🔴
TRIPLE THAI-FORK	➡ 🔴 🔴 🔴
ONE, TWO HIGH KICK	🔴 🔴 ➡ 🔴
ONE, TWO MIDDLE KICK	🔴 🔴 🔴
ONE, TWO LOW KICK	🔴 🔴 ⬇ 🔴
TRIPLE KNEE COMBO	⬅ 🔴 🔴 🔴
DOUBLE KNEE & LOW KICK	⬅ 🔴 🔴 ⬇ 🔴
STOPPING	⬅ 🔴
STOPPING FEINT KNEE	⬅ 🔴 🔴
SLEDGE HAMMER	🔴🔴
BACK ROLL	⬅⬅ 🔴
FEINT LEG BAZOOKA	*During Back Roll* 🔴
SLICER	➡➡ 🔴
GATLING COMBINATION	🔴 🔴 🔴 🔴 🔴
SPINNING FEINT STRAIGHT	⬅ 🔴 🔴
SIDEWINDER	⬅ 🔴
NORTHERN LIGHT	🔴 🔴 🔴
SOUTHERN CROSS COMBO	🔴 🔴 🔴
CYCLONE EDGE	↘ 🔴
TORNADO UPPER	*During Cyclone Edge* 🔴
RISING COMBINATION	🔴 🔴 🔴 🔴
QUICK SOVAT	🔴 🔴
SNIPER SOVAT COMBO	⬅ 🔴 🔴 🔴
DOUBLE FACE BREAKER	↘ 🔴 🔴
BACK FLING	*From behind* 🔴 *or* 🔴
SNIPER SLASH	➡➡➡ 🔴
SIDE LOW & SIDE HIGH KICK	⬇ 🔴🔴
STEP-IN MIDDLE KICK	↘ 🔴🔴

LAW







THE DRAGON LEGEND FIGHTS FOR HONOUR

Marshall Law the dragon legend has had little time to formulate a comprehensive new arsenal of killer moves, as he spent most of the intervening time sifting through the wreckage of his ruined dojo and comforting the relatives of his pupils that were so viciously hospitalised by Kazuya's paid hitmen. The leader of the attack - Baek Doo San the Korean Killing Hawk - has gone unpunished for long enough, and Law now feels he is ready to complete his two-fold attack strategy; to cripple Baek Doo San both mentally and physically, and to finally bring Kazuya down and to justice.

Law has obviously spent some time studying new techniques in the small amount of spare time available after the dojo rebuilding work, and this intensive training seems to have mainly centred on diversifying his flip-kick skills. This is where the master Law player can shine through - no one can deny that Marshall Law is a sight to behold when inflicting some airborne flip-kicking destruction on a hapless enemy. Those Tekken 2 players with an aversion to flip-kicking will find Law's other attacks somewhat limited, as he has gained very little other techniques. However, his quickness and air-superiority have won Marshall Law fans the world over, and he remains as popular as ever.

LAW'S TECHNIQUES

Left Linked Knuckle - Law's main prowess lies with his hard-hitting kick attacks, but he also has a couple of fast (but not hugely damaging) punch strings. As the name suggests, all the punches are quickly produced from Law's left fist as he shuffles forward, pounding the enemy with five darting punches. With correct timing, you should be able to hit with all five hits (try to catch a jumping opponent for some interesting effects), but usually the first two punches connect while the rest are blocked. After practising, try linking this Knuckle string with the Dragon Knuckle combo for a massive eight high hits!





Rave War Combo - No guide to Tekken 2 would be complete without a mention of this excellently-named punch-string. This was one of the first to be discovered in Tekken, and remains as simple as it ever was. This is the ideal attack for beginners, who are just getting to grips with Tekken 2, whilst oldhands use this very infrequently, and only as a change from Law's numerous flip-kicking antics. The difficulty of this combo is the lack of linking ability to other techniques; try the Left Kinked Knuckle for a better series of punches that may be combined with other movements.

Dragon's Tail - The name of this technique describes Law's actions perfectly. He falls onto his side with his legs outstretched and spins to his left, catching the enemy with his legs like a fly-swat and upturning them providing the timing is exact. The main advantage of this technique is the amount of wounding caused by the full force of the Law's possessed spirit.





"WATCH ME DEFEAT MY ENEMIES ONCE MORE. THE FIRE OF THE DRAGON CONSUMES EVERYTHING!"

Sliding - Another technique that Law developed for the first Iron Fist tournament was the sliding move that knocks an opponent off their feet. This has remained useful in Tekken 2 as it an attempt to block it usually ends in disaster for the enemy. The damage inflicted is not huge by any means, but a quick recovery from Law means that a subsequent low-hitting attack (such as the Dragon's Tail) can be tried. Remember to pick up speed for the attack, and time your hit to coincide with an enemy mistake.

Three Linked High Kicks - Another unbelievably simple technique are the three left-footed high kicks that was the mainstay of any Law player in the first Tekken. These attacks all hit high and fast, but the main advantage of this attack is the Feint Middle Kick that can be employed by pressing forward on the joystick. This almost always knocks an enemy off their feet, and the easiest way to inflict hits using this technique is to switch between the end high kick and the mid-range feint.





Dragon Fang - Law's Guard Impossible move is the same as it ever was - one of the most awesome destructive forces ever seen in Tekken! After a brief pause of energy summoning, Law surrounds himself in magical fire and thrusts forward, striking the foe squarely in the stomach and inflicting massive internal injuries. The shocked opponent spasms slightly in the air before keeling over while Law laughs long and low. As always, remember the initial delay between commencing the move and the execution; as the slow build up of the attack leaves Law extremely prone. Once the fist hits home however, the damage is immense (even more so than Yoshimitsu's Desperate Scream Fist), and the now prone target may be further damaged by a low kick, or even the excellent Dragon's Tail attack.





LAW'S FLIP-KICK TECHNIQUES

First and foremost, Law's flipping manoeuvres float the enemy like nothing you've ever seen, and many of these master techniques can be complemented by a routing attack to finish off an already unsteady foe. Practice your floating follow-up moves, and you can turn Law's flip-kick moves into some of the most deadly in the game.

Crescent Kick - A blinding high kick followed by a hefty somersault is a good starting technique. The main point to remember is to hit an indecisive opponent, or one who is constantly making errors in his fighting style. With the correct amount of distance between you and the foe, the actual somersault itself

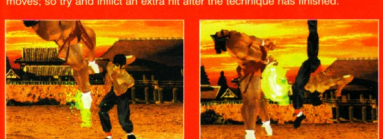


becomes unblockable, leading to a crumpled assailant in need of a follow-up technique of your choosing to finish him off.

Dragon Press - Probably the most spectacular flip kick sequence and definitely the most damaging. Five hits in total starting with a single standing low kick followed up with three very fast high kicks. Things are brought to a close with short somersault that hits at mid-level. Awesome. Another interesting feature of this technique is you can initiate the somersault at any time during the sequence which is useful if your opponents guard is good.



Double Impact - Despite being slower than the Dragon Low Left Somersault (due to Law starting his two hits with a left sweep rather than a right kick), the Double Impact is the preferred technique of the two as it inflicts greater damage. In a combat situation, we found it best to alternate between the two moves and the distinct timing differences lead to some enemy confusion which was dealt with mercilessly. Remember the floating abilities of the two moves; so try and inflict an extra hit after the technique has finished.



Rainbow Kick - A cunning variant of the normal flip-kick that was used to form some master-combos in the first Rave War tournament. Unwary opponents tend to block the first jump without realising the the attack hits on the way down. Law's poor recovery time after the move makes this a technique to try infrequently, as those enemies blocking the down-kick can go in for the kill whilst Law rises to his feet, but providing you utilise this skill of Law's in a mixture of normal flip-kicking, you may well score a hit that the enemy wasn't expecting.

Catapult Kick - There are two variants of this box-standard somersault. Both hit the foe in the stomach, but Law really takes to the skies for the first variation, leaping high in the air before returning to the ground in the usual flashy manner. His other Catapult Kick is of more use to the Tekken 2 expert, and the actual somersault is much less pronounced, and more importantly, it can be linked with a number of other somersault techniques. The low Catapult is the perfect way to start an air-combat extravaganza that may totally devastate any challenger foolish enough to tangle with the martial arts master!

EXTENDED PLAY

Back Flipper - Law's finest somersault technique is the double-hitting flip-kick that quite simply demolishes the opposition! Once the first flip-kick hits, the other knocks the enemy upwards still further, and the total damage caused is equal to some Guard Impossible techniques - such is the strength of the flip-kicking master. Unfortunately, linking this move is problematic, and this should be saved for an assailant foolish enough to question the power of Marshal Law!

Face Crusher - A interesting new throw that sees Law grasping his foe around the neck then launching himself forward using his weight to push his unfortunate there face into the dirt! This throw can be performed when Law attacks from behind or alternatively you can perform the correct commands during the Face Breaker Punch.





LAW'S FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

1. FACE BREAKER PUNCH	Near opponent
DRAGON DIVE	Near opponent
DRAGON KNEE	Near opponent ➡➡
ONE, TWO PUNCH	
STEP-IN MIDDLE KICK	
CATAPULT KICK HIGH	Hold ⬇ then hold ⬆
CATAPULT KICK	Hold ⬇ then ⬆
SHAOLIN SPIN KICK	
LEFT LINKED KNUCKLE	
RAVE WAR COMBO	➡
DRAGON KNUCKLE COMBO	
RAINBOW KICK	Hold ⬇ then ⬆
DRAGON LOW KICK	While crouching
2. THREE-LINKED HIGH KICKS	
FEINT MIDDLE KICK	During 2. hold ➡
SLIDING	Hold ⬇ then ↘↘
CRESCENT KICK	⬆
DRAGON SLASH	➡➡➡
DRAGON FANG	↙ To cancel move ⬆⬆
FACE CRUSHER	From behind or
DRAGON FALL	During 1.
DOUBLE IMPACT	While crouching
DRAGON LEFT SOMERSAULT	While crouching
FRONT KICK LEFT SOMERSAULT	While getting up
SIDE KICK RIGHT SOMERSAULT	While getting up
HIGH KICK RIGHT SOMERSAULT	
SIT STRAIGHT LEFT SOMERSAULT	⬇
DRAGON PRESS	⬇
JUMP SIDE KICK SOMERSAULT	⬆
QUICK SOMERSAULT KICK	
BACK FLIPPER	
DRAGON'S TAIL	↙
RAMPAGE	While crouching

YOSHIMITSU

MECHANISED NINJA DEMANDS RETRIBUTION

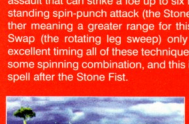
"MY NINJA ARTS ARE BEYOND COMPREHENSION! YOU ARE HELPLESS AS I SLICE OUT YOUR SOUL!"

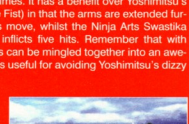
Apart from a superficial overhaul resulting in Yoshimitsu appearing as a mysterious hat-wearing devil-cyborg, this supernatural character has benefited from a number of combat enhancements that make him one of the most exciting characters to control. The leader of the Swastika party was the most unconventional fighter in the first Tekken tournament, and this accolade remains unchanged in the second competition as the enraged ninja attempts to confront Kazuya Mishima over the loss of the scientist responsible for his robotic outfit.

Those who have previously fought with Yoshimitsu know of his sword-play, and for the second Iron Fist festival he has a number of excellent sword-slashing moves that are great for defacing an assailant. In addition, the devil-ninja has trained to throw a foe in a multitude of different (and highly impressive) ways and has also learned another spinning attack to finish off his weird and wonderful repertoire.

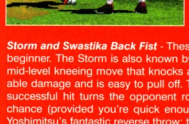
YOSHIMITSU'S TECHNIQUES

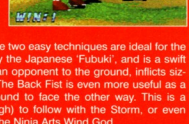
Slap-u-Silly - Yoshimitsu's new spinning multi-hitter is an excellent rapid assault that can strike a foe up to six times. It has a benefit over Yoshimitsu's standing spin-punch attack (the Stone Fist) in that the arms are extended further meaning a greater range for this move, whilst the Ninja Arts Swastika Swap (the rotating leg sweep) only inflicts five hits. Remember that with excellent timing all of these techniques can be mingled together into an awesome spinning combination, and this is useful for avoiding Yoshimitsu's dizzy spell after the Stone Fist.





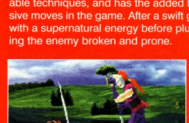
Storm and Swastika Back Fist - These two easy techniques are ideal for the beginner. The Storm is also known by the Japanese 'Fubuki', and is a swift mid-level kneeing move that knocks an opponent to the ground, inflicts sizable damage and is easy to pull off. The Back Fist is even more useful as a successful hit turns the opponent round to face the other way. This is a chance (provided you're quick enough) to follow with the Storm, or even Yoshimitsu's fantastic reverse throw; the Ninja Arts Wind God.

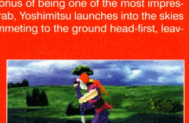




Grass-Mowing Cannon - The delightfully-named spinning leap is an adaptation of the Solar Kick and Shark Attack combination in the first Tekken. This starts with the two two moves previously hitting the middle and then high, before a final pounce and thrust begins Yoshimitsu's legs up into the chest of the unfortunate victim. Monumental damage is inflicted providing all three attacks hit, and this is a marvellous floating combo too. The drawback is the slow start of the Solar Kick, so mainly use this spinning combination to float leaping opponents.

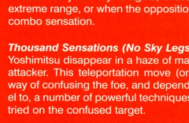
Ninja Arts Wind God - The reverse throw of Yoshimitsu damages the victim beyond recognition and inflicts more damage that some characters' unblockable techniques, and has the added bonus of being one of the most impressive moves in the game. After a swift grab, Yoshimitsu launches into the skies with a supernatural energy before plummeting to the ground head-first, leaving the enemy broken and prone.

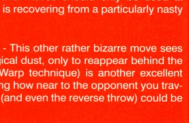




Manji-agura Swastika Crouch and ***Thousand Sensations*** - The following moves are unique to Yoshimitsu and strange to behold, as the ninja utilises ancient meditation techniques to worry the opposition and confuse them beyond comprehension. The crouching move is the initial stage of the Thousand Sensations trance state, and once performed, Yoshimitsu simply assumes a cross-legged sitting position on the ground. Once the channelling position has been achieved, Yoshimitsu can perform the Thousand Sensations, where he positions his sword in an upright position and receives healing from it. A small amount of energy is given after every three short thrusts. As you may imagine, these two moves should only be used at extreme range, or when the opposition is recovering from a particularly nasty combo sensation.

Thousand Sensations (No Sky Legs) - This other rather bizarre move sees Yoshimitsu disappear in a haze of magical dust, only to reappear behind the attacker. This teleportation move (or Warp technique) is another excellent way of confusing the foe, and depending how near to the opponent you travel to, a number of powerful techniques (and even the reverse throw) could be tried on the confused target.





Karin - Flower Wheel - The final otherworldly technique Yoshimitsu employs (aside from his sword attacks) is the axis-shifting wheel. From a moderate distance, Yoshimitsu starts to spin extremely fast, before rotating to the side of the attacker and leaving a trail of magical dust behind him. Use this to confuse an enemy and to move to an open flank where a number of devastating attacks can be attempted.

YOSHIMITSU'S BLADED TECHNIQUES

The majority of Yoshimitsu's new moves take the form of sword-strikes from his magical blade. Many of these moves are unblockable, most are very quick, and some inflict terrible injuries that pierce and slash.

Death Slash - The unblockable down-swing of 'Yoshimitsu' slashes down through an enemy after a small back-swing. It is the pause before the downwards slash that is problematic, with the opponent able to try all manner of

death-dealing attacks before the sword has chance to hit. Yoshimitsu has had a rethink here, and now by pressing down-back on the joystick, the sword may be held behind whilst Yoshimitsu shuffles forward. This spells confusion for the opponent who is now unsure of when the strike will come, and is thus more susceptible to a well-timed slash. Time your shuffles well and this could be an excellent way to keep an attacker at bay.

Samurai Cutter - A remarkably quick and visually stunning slash frenzy where the ninja bends down in a cunning attempt to coax the other player forward before unleashing the sword in a huge scything arc.





Desperate Scream Fist and ***Windmill*** - Yoshimitsu's first unblockable attack has made it through to the second game without any changes at all. The delay as Yoshimitsu draws his sword back is still a problem, so use this when an opponent has just fallen to the floor so that the foe receives a skewering just as they rise. This attack should be employed very infrequently as it is extremely easy to avoid, so place it in your fighting technique at interesting moments, and rely on surprise rather than luck. A new variation to this technique allows you to surprise opponents who see the start of this move and rush in for a throw. Press left punch once more as the sword is drawn back to activate the Windmill attack. Almost immediately the weapon is turned into a whirring blade of death cutting down anyone foolish enough to step into range.

No Confusion - Just like No Grief this is an excellently bizarre suicide technique that is equally as damaging to your foe. With his back towards you Yoshimitsu poses in a graceful stance before drawing his sword in front of him with the point pressing into his stomach. Then he rams the sword through himself and his opponent before collapsing in a crumpled heap on the ground. Many people have written in to **MAXIMUM** with puzzled queries regarding the nature of these techniques - what exactly is the point of losing a round so spectacularly? Well, the No Grief and No Confusion techniques are used in the final stages of the round to steal victory from a healthy foe. With correct positioning and expert timing, the skewer passes through Yoshimitsu and into the enemy, causing more damage to them. Should you both die, the match becomes a draw, but both competitors win a round, meaning that in a two round fight, you should win the first bout and try for a skewer in the closing seconds of round two. Congratulations are in order after a fight such as this; well done, you've just pulled off the most spectacular victory in Tekken 2!





YOSHIMITSU'S SUB-BOSS IS

KUNIMITSU

● ***AGE*** - *?* ● ***WEIGHT*** - *58 kg* ● ***HEIGHT*** - *173 cm*
● ***BLOOD GROUP*** - *O*

Kunimitsu was a former member of Yoshimitsu's Swastika party (a posse of ninja bandits), and when she joined, she lost her Japanese identity (and nationality) and acquired the skills of the Swastika school of 'jujutau'; a particular ninja art. She specifically chose to specialise in the use of stealth knifes, but after numerous petty and more serious thefts, she was dishonourably exiled from the organisation, and trained briefly as a mechanic, constructing air conditioners.

Recently, she unsuccessfully attempted to steal a Native American treasure by challenging the rightful heir (Michelle) in the first Iron Fist championship, and was defeated utterly. Realising this treasure was unobtainable, she travelled to her grandfather's, a swordsmith by trade. This gentleman informed her that Yoshimitsu's sword (also known as 'Yoshimitsu') is a priceless relic inherited through the Swastika party, and that it can sever an opponent's spirit. It is used when the party changes leaders, when the new leader ritually sacrifices the former leader and acquires his power. Kunimitsu's grandfather has spent almost his entire life trying to fashion a similar weapon, but has failed. Therefore, Kunimitsu has entered the tournament in order to physically take the sword from Yoshimitsu's grasp, and present it to her grandfather so that a copy can be made before he dies.





YOSHIMITSU'S FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

SHIZUKU - DROP	*Near opponent*
FUTABA - DOUBLE BLADE	*Near opponent*
1. SOLAR KICK	→ →
SHARK ATTACK	*During 1.*
STONE FIST	← *x 6*
1. NINJA ARTS SWASTIKA SWAP	↙ *x 5*
TRIPLE SCATTERED FLOWER	
PALSON WIND	↗
FUBUKI - STORM	→ →
TREE-FELLING KICK	*During 1.* →
DEATH SLASH	↙
DESPERATE SCREAM FIST	← ←
ZIGZAG	
KNEE CAP	↓ ↘
PK COMBO	
PDK COMBO	↓
2. MANJI-AGURA CROUCH	↓
3. THOUSAND SENSATIONS	*Energy recovery during 2.*
4. DEATH-COPTER	↗
FLYING AIR-ATTACK FIST	*During 4.* ↓
WINDMILL	← ←
SLAP-U-SILLY	↙ *x 6*
MADOI-NASHI - NO CONFUSION	→ →
MADOI - CONFUSION	*Cancels No Confusion* → →
NINJA ARTS WIND GOD	*From behind* *or*
UREI-NASHI - NO GRIEF	↓
SAMURAI CUTTER	*While crouching* ↙ ←
NINJA ARTS WATCHTOWER FALL	*Near opponent* ↓ ↙ ←
HYUUGA CANNON	
KARIN - FLOWER WHEEL	← *x 6 depletes life guage*
SENGAKU-BUKUUBU	*During 3.* ←
CONTINOUS HELL FIST	↙ ↙ *release joystick to cut*
GRASS MOWING CANNON	→ →
SWASTIKA BACK FIST	→

JUN







PRETTY FLOWER WHO FIGHTS FOR THE EARTH!



"KAZUYA'S EVIL SMUGGLING ACTIVITIES SHALL STOP. THE SPIRITS OF NATURE WILL SEE TO THAT!"





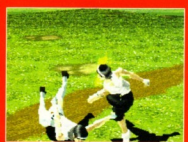
Jun Kazama's own style of classic Bu-Jitsu and reliance on her supernatural mentors for guidance make her a quick and cunning fighter with a vulnerable side that can be exploited by a master player. Jun is a delicate-looking flower and not the obvious choice for the Tekken 2 player, but once she starts to bloom, she becomes a considerable combat animal with an arsenal of lightning-fast combos that can floor heavier and slower players with ease.

The most important aspect of Jun's techniques concerns her speed. Jun is one of the fastest fighters in the game, and the key to exploiting her speed is by perfecting her many combos, before inventing your own. Initially, you should try and concentrate on her normal techniques such as throws and stringing simple attacks together in order to familiarise yourself with unique style of play. Once simple techniques have been mastered, you should be ready to move on to linking some old Bushido-style moves and perfecting her most complex manoeuvres reserved for true experts.

JUN'S TECHNIQUES

Throwing - Jun Kazama benefits from four distinct throws, but these are mainly used for countering and inflict little damage, except for the White Mountain where Jun grabs the left hand of her foe at arm length and pulls her attacker forward against her before planting the assailant firmly into the ground with a massive destructive force. Also of note is the throw performed when Jun is behind her enemy, as it inflicted the greatest amount of damage. This suplex-style grapple results in the confused opponent being lifted over Jun's head and into the ground head-first, crushing the skull and neck.





Scissor Spin Kick - Another move from Jun's ample fighting list that can be inserted into a combination for a personal touch to combat. A benefit of this attack is that it hits twice at close range and is visually appealing, so remember this and use it to your advantage or to finish of a series of routing or stringed moves.

Whiplash - An excellent and simple twisting attack that has the main advantage of being fast to execute. Jun forms a defensive posture before striking high and spinning to strike again with a mid-level punch. This is the technique to start a wealth of different combinations, and the ease of execution is another reason why this technique should be at the heart of any Jun fighter's repertoire.

Suiren-Shiun Punch & Kick - This excellent three-tier attack starting with a Whiplash that hits high and then at mid-level, and thus makes it ideal for interweaving into a variety of combos of your own choosing. It also requires special timing, and is therefore a technique to employ with a reasonable degree of accuracy and competence. Although superficially similar to Paul Phoenix's two-stage kick, it is more spectacular and has one important difference in that the second stage can hit home where the first stage failed. So when an opponent blocks high, the low kick penetrates the foe's defences and extends Jun's reach still further.









Devil's Head Fall - Generally speaking, Jun's attacks are most worrying for the opposition at low level, but the Devil's Head Fall is an excellent series of up to three mid-level kicks that can end in a guard-impossible liver strike with the correct practice and timing. The method of execution in this stringed attack must be stressed, as badly-timed kicks lead to a less-damaging series of midriff kicks with no chance of a guard impossible. Whilst practising this technique a badly-judged kick may occur, after which it is advisable to finish with a normal kick as an attempt at the liver strike can end in embarrassing failure. It is wise to gauge your timing correctly, as honing your attacks for the three spins is vital for breaking the opponent's guard.

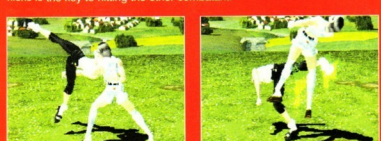
EXTENDED PLAY





Motion Cutting Legs - A fairly simple four-stringed attack that hits high before finishing with a series of low rotating kicks. An excellent advantage of this technique is that it can be difficulty to block, and uses low kicks - the most rewarding type of attack that Jun can attempt.

Triple Spin Attack - For another attack that uses low rotating sweeps at first but finishes with a scissor spin kick for a fourth hit, try this extremely damaging kick-fest. Make sure that the cartwheel connects, as this causes the opponent the most pain. Remember that confusion and a change from low to high kicks is the key to hitting the other combatant.



Dragon Carraige Kick - A excellent flip kick that can be used successfully as the start of many Jun combinations. The kick on it's own hits mid-level and has few unguarded moments even when blocked. If it strikes follow up with three low sweeps. This attack then becomes the Dragon Carraige Kick Cutting Legs and can be followed further with a Scissor Spin Kick for incredible pain potential.

Collision Thigh - Similar to the Mountain White Dew but starting with a low kick from a standing position thus making this technique hard to guard against. This is followed by two high level punches and completed with a mid-level kick, the most damaging part of the whole attack. A classy technique that is indicative of Jun's fighting style.



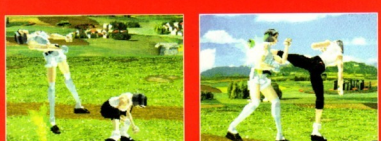
JUN'S COMBOS

Due to her low hitting power, Jun is one character in Tekken 2 with an exceedingly diverse combo potential; to such an extent that it becomes a mix and match choice of the stringing techniques that appear most impressive to you. When you first attempt your own individual combinations, try something quite basic like a number of linked punches followed by a kick. Do not despair if your attempts end in disaster; the secret is in the timing of each punch or kick, and particular speed and precision is needed to link the moves and avoid an enemy block or counter. To introduce you to the world of combo creation, **MAXIMUM** has included a combination that is very popular in arcades across Japan; the Green Monster.

Green Monster - By linking together portions of Jun's techniques derived from Bushido, you can create a linked technique such as the Green Monster. The trick is to begin with a left punch (LP), and then switching to a left kick (LK) when you feel the time is right. Change the height of your attacks for variety and effectiveness, but don't forget that a high punch followed by low kick always works well. Also remember that you can always start the combo with a right punch (RP) before moving on to the kicks (as long as the kicks are low), or you can even try to begin the technique with an uppercut or as a second attack - the possibilities are almost unquantifiable. Never forget the timing of your punch and low kicks, as learning when to use these attacks is the key to a devastating Green Monster.

After you've managed to string together a halfway-decent set of moves, why not try and place your personal green monster into a Threaded Cloud Two-stage Kick attack? Once you've managed to effectively merge the two different techniques, you'll find a high proportion of hits scoring at close range. This is when your hard graft finally pays dividends, as no matter where you start to hit (high, medium or low), this Green Monster variant transforms Jun into a combo-driven killing machine! And this is only the beginning...

Jun's awesome personal (and ten-hit) combos are her main strengths given her weak striking power, and you'll realise just how slow and limited some of the other characters' combos are when you switch back to them. It's now up to you to create some of the finest stringing techniques known to humanity...



JUN'S FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

WHIPLASH	
TOOTH FAIRY	
SPINNING LOW KICK	
TRIPLE SPIN KICK	
SCISSOR SPIN KICK	
SUIKEI-SHITAKERI KICK	
LINKED SPEAR POWER	
THREE-RING CIRCUS	
BACK SPIN KICK	
THREADED CLOUD KICK	
DEVIL'S HEAD FALL	
CUTTING LEGS WHITE DEW	
SUIREN-SHIUN PUNCH & KICK	
MOUNTAIN WHITE DEW	
COLLISION THIGH	
MOTION CUTTING LEGS	
MISTY KNUCKLES	
DRAGON CARRAIGE KICK	
CARRAIGE KICK LEGS	
CARRAIGE KICK LEGS	
MOUNTAIN WHITE DEW LEGS	
SERPENT SPINNER	Near opponent
ARM CROSS HOLD	Near opponent
BELL SMASHER	From behind or
HAZUKAN - WHITE MOUNTAIN	Near opponent
GREEN MONSTER COUNTER	Depending on attack or

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MAXIMUM

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE VIDEO GAME WORLD

NINTENDO ULTRA 64: Launch now set for April!

Dateline: November 24, 1995. The Shoshinkai Show opens in Tokyo, showing the world at large the first ever Nintendo Ultra 64 games and fully working hardware. Over the last two years, the technology has been hyped to obscene levels, with Nintendo confident that their collaboration with Silicon Graphics will produce the most stunning 3D to date - along with the best games ever. Now we've seen it, the question has to be, can Nintendo deliver?



This year's Shoshinkai was make or break for Nintendo. Reeling after a bad year of Super Famicom sales, as well as the disappointing launch of the Virtual Boy, NCL clearly had their work cut out in proving to the world that it was still a force to be reckoned with in the videogames arena. This they did proudly with the first unveiling of the Ultra 64 hardware along with what is potentially the greatest game *ever* - Super Mario 64.

What was quite unfortunate was that virtually no other software was revealed at all. What was shown alongside Mario was the frankly disappointing Kirby Bowl 64. Although displaying some very nice 3D, in the gameplay department it was something of a fiasco. Still, it's difficult to expect anything more from 20% complete software and perhaps lends credence to Mr Yamauchi's statement during his key note speech that witnessing unfinished software is almost always something of a disappointing experience.

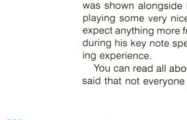
You can read all about the specific titles unveiled at the Shoshinkai later on in this feature, but it has to be said that not everyone was completely bowled over by the Ultra's debut appearance. Despite the appear-

FINAL MACHINES ON DISPLAY!

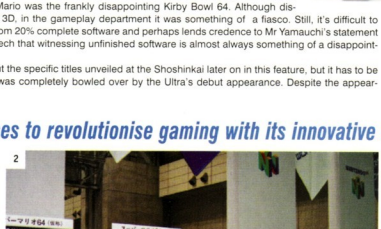
The casing of the NU64 is virtually unchanged since it was first unveiled at the E3 Show in May 1995. Although the machine is very small indeed, the pre-production cartridges were huge. Not the name and logo change for the Japanese market.

Ultra controller promises to revolutionise gaming with its innovative design!

1



2



3



4



THE SHOW FLOOR

Nintendo kept one promise by having one hundred machines on display the Shoshinkai although two different games were playable (pictures 1 and 2) - these scenes are relatively sedate compared to the madness of the public days. The innovative nature of the joypad caused some confusion - special placards explained all (picture 3). Shigeru Miyamoto took time to speak to MAXIMUM (picture 4).

Super Mario 64 debuts in real style at the Shoshinkai Show!
Assembled delegates utterly amazed by Mario's first true 3D adventure!

5



ance of Mario, some developers were clearly not *that* impressed with the system's performance, despite the clear evidence that the NU64 is clearly superior in just about every regard - PlayStation quality with no clipping was one particularly memorable criticism. However, the general consensus was that Nintendo clearly had something special here.

The reliance on cartridges (particularly enormous 64-meg ROMs) was still something of a concern - particularly when the 9,800 yen price-point was announced. It would appear that Ultra gamers are going to have to wait until the launch of the Bulky Drive (or 64DD as the Japanese press are now calling it) until cheaper software becomes available. It's going to be a long wait though - this new read/writable disc format isn't even going to be revealed until Shoshinkai *next* year. From the leaked specs, it does appear that it will be worth waiting for - a 64 megabyte size is planned for each 64DD disc, with loading times approximately eight times faster than the double-speed CD-ROMs used with Saturn and PlayStation.

Some good news on the release side of things: a near-simultaneous roll-out is planned. Of course, Japan will get the goods first, with a confirmed April 21 release. However, UK distributors THE have sent out press releases offering vague promises of a European release "at the end of April" - a date they are sticking to at the time of press despite rumours of a 1997 launch emanating from Japan...

6



MORE SHOSHINKAI MADNESS

Kirby Bowl 64 was only at the 20% complete stage, and although there was some initial interest, the crowds were only really interested in Mario (picture 5). Nintendo revealed that the NU64 controller would be available in various colours (picture 6). Further add-ons such as an Internet connection (via an alliance with Netscape) and the 64DD|2 have also been announced.

Mr Yamauchi addresses the industry

Putting the entire NU64 launch into perspective was the president of NCL, Hiroshi Yamauchi, who held a conference on the first day of the Shoshinkai. Although clearly proud of the Ultra hardware, his intention was to show just *how* the system would revitalise the video games market. Even with the release of the next generation systems from Sega and Sony, Mr Yamauchi believes that the market is still in danger of collapsing as it did 12 years ago when the Atari VCS literally died overnight. "Why did we launch the Nintendo 64? To defend and protect the video game market? For Nintendo to become the sole, absolute, hegemony in the market? No. We are launching the Nintendo 64 to rescue and to save the market that is being threatened. Our objective is not to dominate the market. Rather we want to change the market so that users won't leave us. We want to assure our future."

In a veiled attack on his competitors, Mr Yamauchi commented that "Users will just reject repetitious titles. They are sophisticated. They aren't fooled by copycat titles." Backing up his comments was the range of games revealed at Shoshinkai. No arcade conversions, no fighting games - Nintendo is truly trying to expand the possibilities in video games - "Games should have an original concept - something the user has not experienced before. This is the basic purpose of video games." Expanding this idea of innovation, he continued: "The uniqueness of the Nintendo 64 controller enables new seeds or ideas to grow with developers. For example, the 3D Stick can be used in sports games such as soccer and baseball for more realistic control. A qualitative difference can be felt by the users.

7



"Games should have an original concept - something the user has not experienced before... Without those changes, there may not be a future for videogames."

Without those changes, there may not be a future for video games."

Defending Nintendo's choice of cartridge over CD-ROM, Mr Yamauchi told Shoshinkai delegates: "Many of you feel that CD-ROM is the call of the day. But look at the latest buzz word in the computer world—plug-and-play—which is nothing but Famicom culture. In addition, customers thought that having no loading time is a great advantage, but more importantly, by using ROM-based games, other chips can later be incorporated into the cartridge, which allows Nintendo to offer new game opportunities to game developers. The Nintendo 64 will carry on this tradition of using mask ROMs and computer chips to provide the most advanced games."

8



In any case Nintendo is planning its own mass storage device, currently codenamed the Bulky Drive, which will be available towards the end of the year and will feature titles such as Legend of Zelda 64 in its initial line-up. In the meantime, gamers are going to have to put up with relatively expensive carts - Mr Yamauchi mentioned a price-point of around 9,800 yen - around £75 to £80 in English pounds sterling. Although cheaper than some Super Famicom carts, this is still very expensive - top-end Sony/ Sega product tend to get released at a maximum price of around 6,800 yen. Finishing off his address, Mr Yamauchi invited developers and publishers to a conference in Kyoto on December 14.

A NEW DIRECTION

Nintendo trailed the show by revealing pictures of the final Japanese casing and joypad (picture 7). MAXIMUM rates the design and aesthetic value of the machine and its controller and although very effective in most situations, we found that the "3D stick" was occasionally lacking. Nintendo allowed no direct filming or photography of either Super Mario 64 or Kirby Bowl 64 (picture 8).

MARIO BROS: The next generation!

Some of the greatest videogames ever have the name of Mario in their titles. With sales of over 50,000,000 cartridges worldwide to his name, Nintendo's flagship character is synonymous with quality. And he spearheads NCL's attack on the next generation marketplace in the forthcoming Super Mario 64.





Although Nintendo promised to have ten games up and running for eager delegates to play at the Shoshinkai, only Super Mario 64 and Kirby Bowl 64 made it to the show in a playable form. However, to tell the truth, Mario on its own would have made the arduous 13-hour 'plane flight worthwhile. Nobody came away disappointed by the 50% complete version of the game on display - indeed there were many mutterings that this latest Mario epic could well be the greatest videogame *ever*... not bad for half-finished software on a system that's not due for release for another four months.

Of course, as you can see from the myriad screenshots dotted across these pages, Mario's latest adventure is in 3D, allowing players to explore levels in ways you could only have dreamed of. This is a true next generation extrapolation of the platform game - this has all the playability of Super Mario World along with a level of realism in its movement that truly takes it beyond anything you would have seen before.



THE OLD AND THE NEW
Miyamoto's team have successfully blended aspects of the old Mario games (such as the meanies) into an all-new 3D environment. The four buttons on the right of the Ultra controller allow for spectacular views (as shown in the picture above).

A new dimension for Mario in what could be the greatest game ever! Witness for the first time the power of the Silicon Graphics home technology!

SUPER MARIO 64: THE GRAPHICS

Right from the very beginning, it's always been the case that Mario titles have never been the best-looking of videogames. In fact, a lot of the charm and visual excitement you get from Mario games has always been derived from the small effects and little touches added to the games' basic look. Such is the case with Super Mario 64. Looking at the screenshots, you may very well believe that there is nothing here that couldn't be handled by a PlayStation or Saturn. However, see the game in action and you will be forced to re-evaluate your opinions as it is a visual masterpiece of unprecedented proportions.





Previous boasts from NU64 developers about the system's workstation-like performance are borne out with Mario. Everything moves at a super-smooth frame rate, which does occasionally dip when complex objects are on-screen (particularly in the showdown with Bowser). In terms of pace and speed, Mario 64 easily matches the slickness of Yoshi's Island and Super Mario World. Except this time it's all 3D.

The polish of the game is already evident. The aforementioned battle with Bowser shows the Ultra's dazzling graphical effects to excellent effect - all of the 3D objects are solidly displayed (no dodgy clipping here) with a phenomenal array of special effects present. Watching Mario get toasted by his arch-nemesis' fiery breath is pretty much an experience in itself.





The landscapes again show a solidness of 3D unmatched on anything we've seen to date. Polygon pop-up would seem to very much be a thing of the past if Mario 64 is taken as a yardstick of the machine's 3D capabilities. The 3D landscapes are pretty simple, but show off the Ultra's superior texture-mapping with consummate ease. We were impressed to see no ugly texture-map pixelisation at close range, just as promised. In fact, the 3D behaved remarkably well and in all the time we spent playing Mario 64, the graphics only lost their solid consistency at one point. Let there be no doubt. In terms of classy visuals, Super Mario 64 is in a class all of its own.

RE-INTRODUCING BOWSER
Mario games are well known for their ingenious methods of boss disposal, and in the "digest" version of Super Mario 64 at the Shoshinkai, delegates were able to take on a new-look Bowser.
With his fiery breath, this boss is certainly astounding to behold - and quite deadly. However, Mario is able to dispose of the amphibian menace by grabbing him by the tail, spinning him around and then throwing him away! Who knows what else the finish game will offer?



WHAT'S IN THE GAME?

The software produced for the Shoshinkai was designed to show off as much of the game as you could possibly see in around ten minutes. Nintendo were expecting a huge amount of interest in the game and were thus limiting the amount of time you could spend at the machine (like everyone else, **MAXIMUM** queued a huge amount of times to get as much gameplay time on Mario as we could).
Before the game began, you were treated to a fully rendered, fully animated Mario face. Using the controller, you could zoom in and out, rotate him and even use an on-screen hand to tweak various parts of his features.
The game begins proper with the main map also taking the form of a 3D world. A







WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE
The Silicon Graphics technology allows for visual effects never seen before in home videogames. The pictures to the left represent the uncanny water-rendering results the technology can achieve. You really need to see it in motion to get the idea.

Mario's undersea journeys are a joy to behold in three dimensions!

single castle was available for play, although it was possible to explore the environs around the building. Once inside, the real fun begins, with Mario able to access different games areas by choosing different doors.

From here, it was possible to get a real feel for the sheer variety the game has to offer - even in this completely unfinished state. Easily impressing us was the Rocky Mountain level, which shows Mario scaling an enormous peak, accosted by "living walls" which shoot out from the cliff face to knock him off the narrow ledges. It was on this level that **MAXIMUM** had one of its few complaints about this game. Contrary to the huge swell of positive opinion about the 3D stick, we actually found that some control was lacking here and quite often we found ourselves walking into the wall rather than travelling in the direction we wanted.





The different gameplay features that made the older Mario games so cool returns with a vengeance in Mario 64. For example, it's here that you can begin to appreciate the range of new moves open to Mario. As well as an excellent super-jump, the plumber is also able to to climb up walls - useful as the "living walls" tend to send you flying off precipices at the most inconvenient of times.

Again emphasising variety was the slide level. This was a supremely playable mini-stage that saw Mario hurtling at great speeds down an enormous slide. Again, everything was in proper 3D. No hideous deaths scenes occurred if you flew off the edge of the slide - just use the 3D stick to take Mario in the general direction of the slide as you plummet and you were pretty much guaranteed to get back to it. Using Mario's momentum, it was also possible to cut corners on the chute, which was a great touch. Overall then, great stuff.





AWESOME PLAY MECHANICS

The amount of time being put into the feel of the game by Shigeru Miyamoto's team was self-evident in the "digest" demo of Super Mario 64 that we played. The next port of call was the Ice Land, which features the same kind of icy momentum seen

As Mario enters the 3D age, his range of movements has been hugely expanded!

ALL-NEW ACTIONS
Mario's entrance into the 3D arena promises a wealth of potential realism. The range of his movements (which was already far beyond the Sonics and Earthworm Jims in 16-bit Mazer offerings) has been expanded to include a range of new activities for the Brooklyn plumber. Most obvious amongst them at Shoshinkai was the enhanced climbing (right).





MORE ADVANCED AI
In other platform games, the meanies have little intelligence. Mario games have always delighted their audiences with sprites who are just a tad smarter. Here, Mario has stolen a baby penguin, resulting in a maternal outraged response!



before in other platform games. However, the sheer "feel" of it in Mario 64 along with the 3D and the control offered by the 3D stick made this stage seem far more exciting than any other platform game.

Like previous Mario epics, SM64 also features underwater stages and these were frankly outstanding. The freedom offered by the 3D nature of the new adventure was at its greatest here, with Mario able to swim in whatever direction he chose. The only limitations in this stage involved the time limit imposed. It makes sense that Mario needs to breathe, and a power gauge appears on-screen, steadily decreasing until you surface for air. In the underwater domain, Mario uncovers treasure chests packed with coins, and also comes across a sunken wreck. Best of all is a deep sea jaunt through a cave which leads to an absolutely incredible submarine, which has to be seen to be believed. Again, it's the little effects

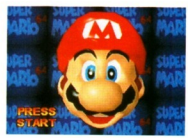


The power of NU64 technology is showcased in the amazing Super Mario 64! Miyamoto's team have taken platform games into the 21st century!

here that are the icing on the cake. Mario's field of vision is limited here for the very first time, with an awesome undersea visual effect. This level was yet another totally outstanding affair and was probably the highlight of the demo version of Super Mario 64.

Other stages available for play included an excellent fire stage, replete with collapsing bridges and rampaging fireballs along with the showdown stage against Bowser. The arrival of a boss stage was greeted with much enthusiasm by **MAXIMUM** and it must be said that we were slightly disappointed. Whilst Bowser himself is a masterpiece of 3D (as are his fireballs), it's here that slowdown reared its ugly head. It was still great figuring out how to defeat the creature (by ducking behind him and swinging him around by his tail), but it was here that the NU64's technical limitations appeared to be defined. However, from our subsequent chat with Shigeru Miyamoto, it appears clear that the Mario team are still doing their best to get to grips with the NU64's 3D systems and Mr Miyamoto seemed confident that any technical problems would be easily sorted out by the time of the game's release in April next year.







THE AUDIO SCORE

The NU64 features a built-in co-processor capable of some stunning sounds, but again, just like Super Mario World on the Super NES, the sound capabilities of the machine have been used very subtly, depending on your locale within the game. One thing that hasn't changed is NCL's propensity for cutesy music during their Mario epics. Yes, it's technically better (as you would expect) but the actual music itself is pure Mario. One thing that surprised us slightly was the fact that Mario himself is a lot more vocal than ever he was in previous outings. Jumps and superjumps are met with a bit of vocal force from Mario, as opposed to the reassuring sound effects found in previous Mazzer games. Don't expect to be bowled over immediately by the Ultra's audio prowess - expect better quality renditions of what we've already come to expect from Mario.



OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Any new Mario game from Mr Miyamoto is an event to look forward to, but a *3D Mario game* on possibly the greatest video games system ever devised for home use? That's got to be something really special. And indeed, rather predictably, it is. **MAXIMUM** firmly believes that Nintendo have got what's required to retake the video games market just on the strength of Super Mario 64. Forget the technical issues here and don't bother digesting the tech-specs. Once again Nintendo have proved that it is the *gameplay* that is most important and NCL have proved that their skills are as effective in the 3D arena as ever they were in the 2D worlds of the Super NES.

The same kind of incredible excitement we got out of playing Super Mario World on the Super NES all those years ago returned with a vengeance when we picked up the controller to play Mario 64. Yes, we've got minor quibbles with the game, such as the effectiveness of the 3D stick and the occasionally wobbly frame rate. But the fact is, for 50% complete software, this is totally mind-blowing stuff.



FIRE, FIRE!

Just like the water world, the fiery domains of Super Mario 64 are an excellent example of some of the superlative visual distortion effects Nintendo's machine can do with polygons (above). The main chamber of the castle (right) had all of its doors unlocked in the Shoshinkai version of Mario 64 - you were able to visit any of the worlds whenever you wanted in any order. You can't do this in the finished game.

The return of the awesome MARIO KART!



Forget Killer Instinct, Yoshi's Island and Donkey Kong Country - the biggest selling Super NES cartridge ever is Super Mario Kart... and it's just about complete on NU64.

As hinted in **MAXIMUM**'s exclusive Nintendo interview last month, Mario and friends are returning for more karting action, this time with fully rendered characters performing in a phenomenal 3D environment. All of the original karters are back, albeit radically designed, and we can reveal that new Nintendo characters from the Mario mythos are slated to appear in the game, most notably Wario.

Super Mario Kart R (its provisional name) also boosts multi-player options. Whereas the original game was a constant split-screen affair, Mario Kart R offers a choice of multiple or single screen options depending on how many player have been chosen. This title is the first to use all four of the NU64's controller slots



Examine the all-new rendered terrains of Mario's latest driving caper!



and even though four split-screens may be cause for some eye-straining consequences, **MAXIMUM** can report that the NU64's high resolution is more than up to the task of rendering the four screens with decent detail.

At the Shoshinkai, **MAXIMUM** spotted the game's director, the legendary Shigeru Miyamoto and pinned him down for some on-the-spot information. According to Mr Miyamoto, the game is around 95% complete and will be available at launch with the NU64 on April 21 next year. The game is played using the "3D thumb controller" in the centre of the pad; its analogue response has so impressed the Mario creator that he sees no need for Nintendo to ever release a steering wheel for the machine.

Other information gleaned from the gaming legend: no link-up for NU64. Not now. Not ever. Nintendo's policy dictates that one machine and one TV are all that is needed for multi-player games. Mr Miyamoto pointed out that eight-player games would have been possible on NU64, but the minuscule size of eight mini-screens made it unworkable.

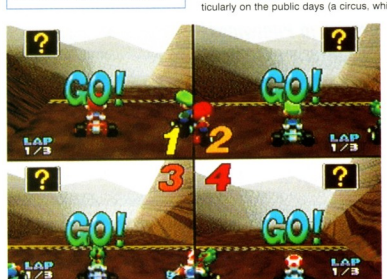
So, if Super Mario Kart R is so near completion, why was it not playable at the Shoshinkai? Mr Miyamoto's response was surprising: apparently to fully demonstrate what Super Mario Kart R is all about, you'd need to show all the multi-player options working and due to the relatively small size of each Ultra-booth, Nintendo was concerned about huge over-crowding around each machine - particularly on the public days (a circus, which thankfully **MAXIMUM** avoided).





ADVANTAGES OF 3D (PART 1,003)

The Mode 7 terrains of Mario's first karting experience were distinctly flat. The technology just couldn't cope with hills or anything of that ilk. For Super Mario Kart R, the entirety of the game is fully rendered in real-time 3D - although at first glance, you wouldn't be able to tell. This allows for the dramatic inclusion of hills - but where were the power-ups in this unfinished version?



From what was shown at the Shoshinkai, **MAXIMUM** has absolutely no doubt that Super Mario Kart R is going to be a major player in Nintendo's launch strategy for the NU64. The rendered graphics would seem to show little of the NU64's graphical capabilities, but just like Yoshi's Island, the effects of the new technology are very under-stated, but extremely effective. Witness the foggy stages and the frankly incredible ghost houses and you will realise that Mario Kart R is far, far more impressive than the screenshots revealed so far would let on. Couple the game's visual qualities with what is the most rampantly playable racing title ever released and you should get some small idea of the magnitude of this NU64 title. It's going to be big...



SPLIT-SCREEN PERMUTATIONS

Above you'll see the three screen variations for the different types of multi-player game. At the top is the simultaneous four-player mode, whereas the middle and bottom pictures show the two-player mode - choose whether you want a vertical or horizontal split.

The sequel to one of the greatest driving games ever is heading for NU64! Simultaneous four-player racing and new characters await in Mario Kart R!

Taking flight simulations to the next level with Paradigm's PILOTWINGS!





Shigeru Miyamoto stamped his authority on Super NES mastery with Pilotwings - an incredible 3D aerial escapade which rammed home the technical superiority of Nintendo's 16-bit technology. Over a year ago, Nintendo announced that Miyamato was collaborating with arch-simulation lords Paradigm and it was logically assumed that the outcome would be an NU64 version of Pilotwings. The Shoshinkai show finally confirmed that and we got our first look at the game.

Pilotwings 64 effectively shows off what the Ultra is best at - stunning-looking 3D with no horrible clipping or polygon warping. At this stage in development, it's very difficult to judge what the game's actual objectives are, as the Super NES version's aerial rings no longer seem to be present.

What is obvious, however, is an entirely new range of characters and a substantially different assortment of vehicles to fly with. In the line-up you'll find gyrocopters (similar to "Little Nellie" in the James Bond film You Only Live Twice), rocket jet-packs and hang-gliders.

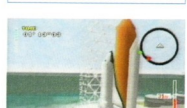
The buttons on the far right of the pad control the perspective, as in all the NU64 games on show. Like Virtua Racing and its brethren, it's possible to view the action from four different viewpoints. Again, control is achieved using the "3D thumb pad" in the centre of the joypad.

It's very clear to see the simulation heritage behind Pilotwings, and having experienced the quality of Paradigm's SGI-based flight sims, it's clear to see that the NU64 game matches up quite closely graphically. The range of scenery is quite incredible and the speed and fluidity seems, on the most part, to be extremely impressive when compared to the 3D worlds we've experienced with Saturn and PlayStation. One tiny aspect that concerns **MAXIMUM** is the fluctuating frame rate, which hopefully will be addressed in the final version of the game.



A TRUE SEQUEL

Pilotwings is one of the most celebrated Super NES titles - and the Ultra sequel looks great. A new range of characters for the game has already been unveiled (see above) and the range of backgrounds have an uncanny sense of realism about them.



Professional flight sim experience shines through in Pilotwings! Paradigm's first home game looks utterly excellent!



Like Goldeneye 007, it's clear that only a fraction of what PilotWings has to offer has been revealed so far by Nintendo. But the question has to be: why wasn't the game on display? Rumours circulating around the Shoshinkai seemed to indicate that although Pilotwings is graphically up-to-scratch, there's still a great deal of work to be done in getting the feel of the game right - hence its inclusion as a video-only product at the show.





PILOTWINGS 64 LOOKS GREAT!

The graphical capabilities of the NU64 show their Silicon Graphics origins in Pilotwings 64. The detail of the graphics is quite outstanding and the lack of any kind of ugly pixellisation or polygon "pop-up" is a breath of fresh air.



SOFTWARE CREATIONS FLY THE FLAG

Gamers who once owned a Spectrum, C64 or NES should be instantly familiar with the company called Software Creations. Responsible for some of the most playable games on those respective systems, the company have established an excellent reputation for quality product - as well as a good, long-standing working relationship with Nintendo.

Only brief nanoseconds' worth of video footage have been released of their debut NU64 title: Creator. The question is, just what exactly is Creator? What does it do... and why?

MAXIMUM can only provide the sketchiest of answers at this point. What is clear is that Creator isn't really a game in the strict sense of the word, and we have it on good authority that it isn't a simulation game in the style of Sim Earth or anything like that. The good money is on Creator being a user-based rendering system, enabling gamers to easily create their own 3D worlds, animate them and populate them with creatures (in the style of the T-Rex pictured on these pages). Apologies for the lack of definitive detail, but it would appear that despite the game's debut on the Shoshinkai floor, Nintendo's non-disclosure gagging orders remain in full effect. Of course, more details should emerge in the coming weeks...





LUCASARTS STRIKE BACK

Aside from the forthcoming Miyamoto-produced and Rare produce, one game that was highly anticipated for the Shoshinkai was Lucasarts' first NU64 product, Star Wars: Shadow of the Empire. Again, as seemed to be the overall effect of the Shoshinkai, everyone (including **MAXIMUM**) was left gagging for more.

Shadow of the Empire appears to be set in the same time frame as The Empire Strikes Back and the single level on show was a real-time NU64 recreation of the battle on Hoth, with the player in command of a rebel snowspeeder, taking on the huge AT-AT walkers and their two-legged AT-ST brethren.

As you can see from the screenshots, the amount of 3D detail in the graphics is unprecedented. In no Star Wars game ever have we seen 3D models running in real-time that are so close to the original effects from the trilogy. Take a look at the snowspeeder for example and you can see an incredibly faithful model. Even the rear-mounted cannon and moving wing-flaps make an appearance.

The only problem we can foresee with this game concerns its frame rate. In the demo shown, it seemed to change rapidly; super-smooth when just the snowspeeder is on its own, but quite jerky if you fly around an AT-AT. Particularly in the internal viewpoint.

It's perhaps rash and indeed harsh to judge this product too soon, particularly when all that was seen was some carefully prepared video footage, but we're trying to be honest here. Shadow of the Empire looks like it has a huge amount of potential (and remember, we just saw *one* level), but a great deal of the other games looked better.





ULTRA DETAIL

The Nintendo Ultra 64 has the graphical prowess to knock anything seen outside of an arcade into touch. A good example of the machine's power is to study the 3D models of Shadows of the Empire - how far behind the actual movies are the quality of these scenes?

The legendary LucasArts unveil their first Ultra product! Is this the best Star Wars game to date?





DMA'S ULTRA DESIGNS...

What was extremely good to see was the level of quality NU64 product emanating from the British Isles. Yet another UK-originated product was Body Harvest by DMA - a company previously known for quality works such as Lemmings and its myriad sequels (except the last one).

Their debut Ultra outing is Body Harvest, a game which features the player blasting the living daylights out of alien invaders intent on eating humans! Fair enough...

Actually, although this wasn't the best-looking game revealed at Shoshinkai, **MAXIMUM** has high hopes for this product. It is reminiscent of an aged Activision title on the Amiga called Hunter, with the player able to patrol the landscapes on foot, in ground-based vehicles, in boats and in air-craft. If Body Harvest matches the freedom of movement the Amiga classic offered, along with true 64-bit visuals and more advanced gameplay, this could well turn out to be one classic video game.

Again, as is the situation with all Ultra developers, non-disclosure orders are very much the order of the day, so until Nintendo of America lessen their security, a bit of an information void exists. Rest assured, we'll be continuing our in-depth investigations and should hopefully have something more to report on in the next edition of the magazine.



What next from Shigeru Miyamoto? How about a WAVE RACE then!



MAKING WAVES
There certainly seems to be a lot of racing titles in the initial NU64 line-up. Wave Race is another Miyamoto project (as is Mario Kart R and Buggie Boogie...) but it certainly looks excellent with Nintendo themselves introducing it as the successor to F-Zero...

As well as Super Mario Kart R, Nintendo revealed another racing game from the studios of Shigeru Miyamoto. Unashamedly referred to as F-Zero on water by Nintendo themselves, Wave Race looks like being an absolutely outstanding release. Using the NU64's specialised graphics routines, the machine is able to produce some uncannily realistic water effects, with the player in control of skimmer which speeds along at huge velocities. Again, realism truly comes to the fore here, with players able to use momentum to skid along road-side banks and over jumps - it's touches like these that should make Wave Race 64 an even more enjoyable title. Yes indeed, this is yet another Ultra title eagerly awaited by **MAXIMUM**.



Nintendo roll out their entire catalogue of established Super NES characters! Zelda, Mario and StarFox are all slated to appear on NU64!



One of the more visually pleasing Ultra titles had to be Buggie Boogie - an arena-based racing/shooting game. The aim of the game is to construct your own buggie from the various parts and then blow the living daylights out of the opposition. The carnage takes place on some excellent workstation-quality backgrounds, with a huge amount of detail being used on the buggies themselves. Explosion fans are well catered for as well, as the Ultra's custom graphics produce some extremely impressive conflagrations. Visually, nothing you've seen on either Saturn or PlayStation can get anywhere near this. Buggie Boogie is yet another example impressive example of the Ultra's power.



THE ZELDA DEMO
The Nintendo Bulky Drive (or 64DD as it is now known) isn't even going to be revealed until the next Shoshinkai, but already we have been treated to some developmental demos of the first game - The Legend of Zelda 64.

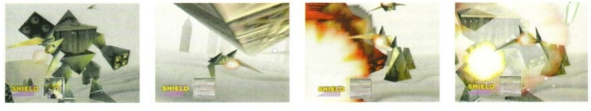


Kirby Bowl 64 and StarFox 64 are the last two titles in the line-up, with both of them looking slightly disappointing at the moment. Our comments on Kirby Bowl can be found in the lead-in feature, but suffice to say that at the moment, it's not looking hugely impressive. The other game, Star Fox 64 appears to be very unfinished at the moment, and despite some clearly superior real-time 3D, the lack of freedom seen in the first StarFox game appears to be back with a vengeance in SF64.

Also gracing us with his presence in the shape of a character demonstration was Link in The Legend of Zelda 64. This showed Link doing battle with a metallic creature and was supposed to represent what we're going to be seeing in the forthcoming 64DD game - our source at Nintendo warned us to expect something totally different - and far superior to what was revealed here.



MORE RACING
There has certainly been plenty of doubt about the NU64's abilities in matching the top-end Silicon Graphics workstations. Prepare to have your doubts dispelled when you check out Angel Studios' awesome-looking Buggy Boogie. The quality of the graphics, the smoothness of the update and the excellent animation promise a most intriguing title.



ANOTHER NINTENDO SEQUEL
Fox McCloud returns in StarFox 64 (presumably this will be renamed StarWing 64 here). Again, there is no doubt about the graphical accomplishments Nintendo have achieved with this particular title. However, it would seem from what was revealed that the gameplay itself returns to the linear nature of StarFox 1 as opposed to the freedom of the delayed Super NES sequel...







RARE-ING TO GO

As the first programming team outside of Japan to get hold of the finished NU64 development systems, it was inevitable that Rare were going to be revealing a great deal of exciting Ultra product. This was duly delivered at the Shoshinkai, although some of the games that *weren't* on show came as something of a surprise.

Although it was announced many, many months ago, the Shoshinkai was the first opportunity to view Rare's forthcoming Goldeneye translation. Previously thought to be a Super NES title using Rare's unparalleled 16-bit ACM technology, the Bond game has gone straight to NU64, taking the form of a first person perspective 3D shooting - if you will, a cross between Doom and Virtua Cop. Not much has been revealed at all - merely a shoot out scene between Bond and enemy agents set in a bland-looking Russian military base. Rare have revealed that further missions involve covert missions (run around not trying to make much noise), sabotage missions and rescue tasks. So, a fair degree of variety is promised.

MAXIMUM believes that Goldeneye was being deliberately under-played at the Shoshinkai. It's clear that the graphical engine behind Goldeneye is capable of some great things as in terms of player animation and frame rate, the game is most impressive indeed. Perhaps only revealing what is in truth a very dull level of the game (albeit close to the scene in the film!) is meant to build up anticipation for the final product.

Rare have a whole host of incredible NU64 titles lined up! Check these out...

Looking far more impressive to Shoshinkai delegates was Rare's Blastdozer. From what was revealed of the game, it appears that mass destruction is the order of the day. A vehicle carrying a large nuclear device is ploughing through different towns and cities and if it hits anything, it's game over (courtesy of a large explosion). Your job is to take your demolition vehicle ahead, and clear the way. This could have been running on a Silicon Graphics workstation as the graphics were extremely impressive. The animation on the assorted vehicles (including a JCB) is second to none and the explosions and resulting debris clearly reward successful destruction with a visual feast of entertainment. The 3D world is also superlative, clearly showing that the NU64 is technologically leagues ahead of anything we've seen so far. This is one NU64 title that we're really looking forward to. Even from the precious seconds of the game that we saw, it's clear that this is going to be a hot game.







WHAT WASN'T THERE FROM RARE?

Well, Kong basically. After the ACM delights of Donkey Kong Country and Diddy's Kong Quest, we were expecting to see some work on a new NU64 platformer starring everyone's favourite gorilla family. Despite some pretty substantial rumours about a fully 3D rendered platform adventure, nothing was forthcoming whatsoever at the Shoshinkai. As usual, Rare are keeping a huge amount of information under wraps concerning their NU64 work which of course questions the very existence of the project, but one likely answer would be that there as only room for one 3D platformer at Shoshinkai and Mario was its name.

Also another big surprise from Nintendo was the total no-show of anything even remotely Killer Instinct related. Nintendo of America is on record as saying that Rare are currently working on a NU64 sequel to the original arcade machine, and a new character for the game was demoed at the LA Siggraph show earlier this year, so to all intents and purposes, it exists. In fact, if what we are told is true, we should be experiencing a totally 3D KI game on NU64. A Nintendo insider told **MAXIMUM** that the game's non-appearance had to do with the fact that as a fighting game, the original was not really that well received in Japan and this particular project was more NoA territory. "We're thinking about not selling it in Japan, but it is quite popular in America... It's quite an extreme game and in Japan it would not be welcomed so much."

Fair enough, but if there was one thing lacking from the games on display, it had to be evidence of any credible fighting games. For the Japanese public, it's clear that for the time being, Sega's Saturn conversion of Virtua Fighter 2 has little (make that no) competition.





BLASTDOZER BRILLIANCE!

hands up who remembers Highway Encounter on the Spectrum? In these extremely original isometric 3D game, you had to clear the way for a bunch of robots by taking on various meanies that lay in its path. Blastdozer would seem to build upon that concept by introducing the most agreeable concept of mass destruction. Potential nuclear armageddon awaits if you fail in your demolishing duties. The graphical capabilities of NU64 would seem to make for some most excellent conflagrations...

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WHAT A LOAD OF TOSH

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2

One of the most eagerly awaited titles on the PlayStation so far has finally been released on import; Toshinden 2 is now available in Japan, and marks Takara's largest undertaking on the PlayStation so far. With the help of Tamsoft and a set of Capcom developers, the Sony machine has finally been granted the sequel to one of the most beautiful beat 'em ups ever.



MAXIMUM has followed the progress of this title over the last two issues, and with the arrival of the finished product, we expected great improvements over the original. Unfortunately, we came away with mixed feelings.

On the plus side, Toshinden 2 superficially appears to be a much more polished product than the first title, and this is apparent from the introduction onwards. The programming team has dispensed with the appaling scrolling text intro, and has attempted a more lavish approach instead. This has resulted in a mixture of actors, CG rendered characters and actual polygon combatants all strutting their collective stuff to the accompaniment of a suitably over-the-top guitar-based musak.



Takara have delivered a bladed combat action title with spectacular special moves and four extra characters!

Once the game eventually begins, players are welcomed with the familiar scrolling text title screen with comprehensive options aplenty. You may choose from a one player mode with eight opponents to face, a full battle featuring (nearly) all the assembled characters, a verses human mode and a practice mode where computer opponents may be selected. Finally, the huge options mode enables various buttons to be assigned, but the large amount of Japanese text makes reconfiguring somewhat problematic.

Once the options screen is safely negotiated, the game itself actually starts, and this is when the main deficiencies become apparent. In an effort to match the speed of rival titles (such as Virtua Fighter 2 and the forthcoming Tekken 2), Tamsoft have upped the speed of the game, and have created an extremely fast action combat game that benefits from breathtaking light-sourcing and the usual lavish backdrops (but appears very jerky when compared to the competition). What hasn't been achieved however, is any sort of fluidity in the movements of the characters, and this stilted motion-capture unfortunately detracts substantially from the overall presentation.

The other major flaw with the fighting itself is the lack of innovation. Anyone expecting an extensive overhaul in the gameplay department is likely to be less than impressed, as the choice of original characters have little more to offer than they originally did in the first game. Moves are implemented by simple button pressing, and although there are taunts, the special manoeuvres are distressingly easy to pull off (although the options screen allows button reconfiguration) leading to a somewhat dull match with both fighters launching a series of spectacular magical attacks at each other from relative safety. Make the super moves harder to execute and the game becomes more entertaining, despite the simple nature of the combat.

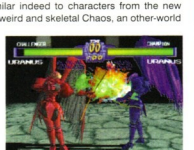


VERMILLION, EH?

The flirting figure of death is arguably the finest fighter in the game (above). Take control of this shadowy character and gun down your adversary with two examples of antique weaponry!

Upon examining the characters in greater detail, it is the three newcomers that have the most to offer. The disrobed Gaia has a number of Bastar-based attacks, and uses a fan to blow magical fiery breath, whilst police-girl Tracy employs a pair of electric nightsticks to inflict pain with just as much efficiency (and looks very similar indeed to characters from the new Fighting Vipers coin-op). The finest of all the second-wave contestants has to be the weird and skeletal Chaos, an other-world







EXPLOSIVE MAGIC EFFECTS!

All fourteen characters in the game benefit from substantially improved special moves (sequence right). The Master's techniques are the most spectacular to view as she summons the might of a huge broadsword to dispense justice!2

entity with a good selection of impressive moves that confound and flummux foes, and some very strange victory poses.

Of course, this wouldn't be a next generation fighting game without a number of bosses and secret characters, and Toshinden 2 delivers four hidden characters to access; and all of them spruce up the action considerably. The penultimate battle places your warrior in a heavenly chamber with a towering angel of light known unfortunately as Uranus. This spirit of good has an ethereal bow which she uses to fire flaming arrows, and has a devastating charge attack amongst her arsenal of supernatural combat powers, and also bears more than a passing resemblance to Tekken 2's own angel. The final boss is the enigmatic Master, a small waif-like Ellis clone that uses a variety of huge summoning swords to deal death. Both these bosses are excellent to view (except when in motion) but both suffer bouts of inactivity and are distressingly easy to beat unless playing on the hardest of difficulty settings. Then the whole game becomes rather tiresome.

Of much greater interest are the two ultra-hidden bosses that **MAXIMUM** can exclusively reveal; the excellent Sho and the arch-villain Vermilion. Sho is still the fastest character in the game, and has received





Despite the lack of innovation, this still is an astounding improvement over the original!



a couple of new additions, benefiting from a new air kick and a super special attack. However, his roll is sluggish and his stage appears in monochrome accompanied by the excellent Tocatta and Fuge which unfortunately meanders into a horrible rock monstrosity. Most exciting, is the final boss; a 1920s black-caped shadowy figure known as Vermilion. 'Big Verm' has some excellent attacks, and almost all of them involve the unloading of ammunition from the pair of antique firearms that he carries, and his stage is an atmospheric woodland graveyard at dusk. After the previous lack of innovation, these unique bosses salvage some gameplay from an otherwise disappointing sequel.

In spite of these rather serious problems, this is still an interesting beat 'em up that plays and looks far better than the Saturn conversion of the original (as you would expect). Toshinden 2 has much to offer the beginner, but little to entertain the professional fighting game fanatic. Fans of the first Toshinden game are sure to lap up this second instalment with great relish, but those gamers wishing more in the way of playability should be wary of the flaws mentioned previously. **MAXIMUM** hopes that the enhanced coin-op version receives a substantial tweaking before being released in Japan.



Saturn TOSHINDEN S secrets!
The deadly Cupido is revealed!

The Saturn conversion of Toshinden is set to make an official appearance sometime in February, and as Sega are handling this themselves, this should mean a rather slick PAL optimisation if we're lucky. Meanwhile, more has been uncovered on the mystery fighters contained in the game. As you would expect, both Sho and Gaia make their obligatory appearances, but also present is another Saturn-only warrior, known as Cupido. Small and speedy, this maiden of death can be controlled, and is able to unleash a number of scythe-based arching attacks. Her home-world is the courtyard of a decaying castle located deep beneath the bowels of the Earth making Cupido an excellent addition to the roster of characters arena.





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MAXIMUM NEWS

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COUNTDOWN TO ZERO

THE THIRD PLAYSTATION STREET FIGHTER ARRIVES



Capcom have finally delivered the beat-em-up that everyone has been waiting for - an almost arcade-perfect version of Street Fighter Zero on the Sony PlayStation. Available in Japan since December 29, this latest incarnation (known as Street Fighter Alpha in the UK) pits ten of the world's deadliest warriors against one another in a battle royale taking place before the World Warrior's tournament of Street Fighter 2.

As regular readers of **MAXIMUM** are no doubt aware, the coin-op has featured prominently in previous issues and with good reason; it is arguably the most well-rounded and playable 2D beat 'em up released in the arcades last year, and now home users can enjoy an excellent conversion of this first-class fighter.

As this is the home version, there are many new options available that allow the fights to be tailored to your particular needs. Bouts can now last one, three or five rounds, all the stages may be selected and even the music can be switched between the original arcade tunes or some funky remixes. Added to this is an arcade, verses and training mode, whilst a turbo setting finishes off the wealth of extra features; all of which add to the overall professional appearance expected of Capcom.

Many new features have also made their way into combat itself, making for an even more playable fight. Players may now counter opponent's attacks (providing they have lightning dexterity), but the main addition is the Super Combo bar located at the bottom of the screen which is the key to unleashing some spectacular special moves. Each character has at least two of these shadow attacks that can inflict monumental amounts of damage. Other, more subtle tweaks have also occurred, such as the differing victory icons that appear depending on the technique that you use to defeat the enemy.

PlayStation Street Fighter has EVERY feature from the arcade original!







As you can see from the surrounding screen shots, other characters make an appearance from the coin-op. **MAXIMUM** can reveal that Akuma (known as Gouki), M Bison (Vega) and Dan are all present and selectable, but with cheats that differ from the arcade version - but we can exclusively reveal them on this page. As an extra bonus, Capcom have included the special battle featuring both Ryu and Ken against M Bison in a battle taken straight out of the animated film, but only when certain conditions are met. All these extra secrets, along with high scores and button configurations, may be saved on memory cards for future use.

The only minor problems **MAXIMUM** found were with the loading times (which are annoying but never lengthy) and the speed of the game. Although never sluggish, the fighting lacks the frantic action of Saturn X-Men's Turbo, but is still fast enough for many players. **MAXIMUM** found the PlayStation pad to be rather user-unfriendly when it came to some of the more complex manoeuvres of the game.

These slight quibbles aside, Street Fighter Zero stands out as a PlayStation gem (especially compared to the current crop of uninspiring titles) that deserves weighty praise, and we are counting on an excellent PAL optimisation when the game gets an official release at some stage this year. We do highly recommend getting a



LOOK! SF ZERO SECRETS AHOY!
Literally two days after the game's launch, MAXIMUM had the codes for Dan and Akuma, thanks to a certain Billy Mager of Sheffield.

Revealed! Ryu and Ken versus M Bison in the "Dramatic Battle"!





Capcom's conversion credentials are established with this classic release!





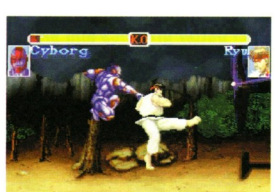
new pad when playing any Capcom fighting game on PlayStation as the Sony pad just wasn't built for this kind of game.

As mentioned elsewhere, Capcom have included video footage of two forthcoming games as an extra bonus. Resident Evil (under the Japanese name of Biohazard) and Street Fighter Interactive Movie are both available to view. One of these games is set to take the world by storm, whilst the other is a teeth-grinding travesty. We'll leave it to you to decide which is which, but those unsure of the answer should read on...

STREET FIGHTER INTERACTIVE MOVIE

Capcom seem to be alternating between excellent and second-rate software, as the frankly appalling Street Fighter Interactive Movie shows. With nearly as little to offer the prospective punter as the tragic Street Fighter Real Battle on Film, the animated version places you in control of a Shadowlaw cyborg that must record various Street Fighter characters fighting each other. What this entails is the watching just under an hour of the animated film and zooming cross-hairs around the screen when a heavy bout of fisticuffs occurs. With successful recordings, the cyborg's repertoire grows until he faces off against Ryu for a battle.

Watching the film on video is one thing, but gazing at tiny video box of the movie and clicking on characters is both pointless and extremely frustrating. You cannot skip the video action unless you watch the film to the end and have a memory card handy, and the actual fight is unbelievably slow and one-sided unless you're prepared to spend hours clicking on every fight you can. The launch of this alongside the vastly superior SF Zero is puzzling, and unless you're a masochistic manga freak, leave this one well alone.



JUGGERNAUT in X-Men Saturn shocker!

It's an old cliche, but as this issue of **MAXIMUM** went to press, we discovered the cheat to play as the unstoppable Juggernaut in the Saturn version of X-Men - and here are some pictures to prove it! The cheat only works in Versus Mode. Use the Akuma cheat (as revealed on page 65) and fight one game as the mysterious SF2 combatant. When you return to the character select screen, press UP/LEFT twice to reveal Juggernaut! This works for both players, allowing for some truly titanic battles. A full moves list for both bosses and the Magneto code is duly promised for **MAXIMUM** issue #4.

SS CAPCOM
EVEN MORE CHILDREN OF THE ATOM
X-MEN
AVAILABLE NOW IN JAPAN

"I'M UNSTOPPABLE!"

MAXIMUM quizzed the Capcom R&D department about the presence of the player-controlled Juggernaut as soon as the code was revealed by Japanese publication, Sega Saturn Magazine. Apparently, the code was left in by R&D developers who wanted to test out their conversion of the Juggernaut. The Magneto code hasn't been acknowledged yet by Capcom, but we should have definitive news for the next issue of the magazine.







The return of PANZER DRAGOON!

At the recent Toshimaen Show in Japan, Sega unveiled early work on one of its most promising sequels: Panzer Dragoon 2 (or Zwei, as it's currently known). The original game remains one of the most stunning looking 3D shoot 'em ups available for the new machines and the sequel looks like being far superior.

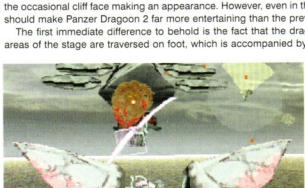
SS SEGA
MORE 3D BLASTING WITH STYLE
PANZER DRAGOON 2
AVAILABLE MARCH IN JAPAN. PRICE TBA





The answer to the above question isn't immediately obvious. The game's creators, Team Andromeda, have only released a very early demo, which they believe is around 15% complete. It features just the one level - a barren, desert-like terrain, with the occasional cliff face making an appearance. However, even in this demo, it's clear that there are several differences which should make Panzer Dragoon 2 far more entertaining than the previous game.

The first immediate difference to behold is the fact that the dragon itself is a lot more versatile. As well as flying, certain areas of the stage are traversed on foot, which is accompanied by some excellent animation on the dragon, which incidentally, has been totally redesigned. At the moment, the same range of weaponry is open to the player - that is, a rapidly firing photon crossbow along with some lock-on homing missiles although it is understood that this may be increased in the final game.



The one big criticism levelled at Panzer Dragoon was the lack of freedom of movement. Like StarFox, Space Harrier and Afterburner, you always flew forward, with only minimal lateral movement. For the most part, this remains the case in the sequel, although Team Andromeda have introduced several "forks" in the levels - this means that there are different routes through, boosting the replay factor of the game significantly. A far deeper storyline is planned for Panzer 2, with many more cut-scenes taking place in the game. This is expected to set the stage for a forthcoming Panzer Dragon role-playing title which Sega have confirmed will appear "in the far future".

Even better graphics and more freedom are planned for this excellent sequel!

POINTS OF VIEW

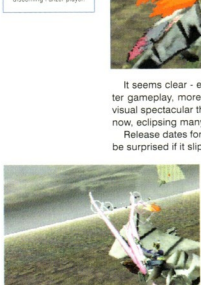
One of the innovative aspects of Panzer Dragoon was the quad-perspective blasting action. You could fire in any direction and scroll around using the top shoulder buttons on the control pad. This remains the case in the sequel. Once again, multiple attacks from all angles are planned, with more surprises in store for the discerning Panzer player.

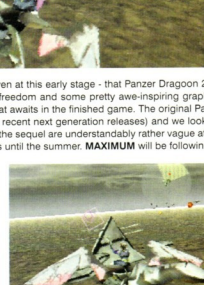


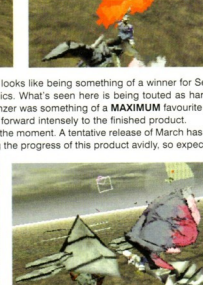


It seems clear - even at this early stage - that Panzer Dragoon 2 looks like being something of a winner for Sega. We're being promised better gameplay, more freedom and some pretty awe-inspiring graphics. What's seen here is being touted as hardly comparable to the planned visual spectacular that awaits in the finished game. The original Panzer was something of a **MAXIMUM** favourite (and it's still worth buying even now, eclipsing many recent next generation releases) and we look forward intensely to the finished product.

Release dates for the sequel are understandably rather vague at the moment. A tentative release of March has been touted by Sega, but don't be surprised if it slips until the summer. **MAXIMUM** will be following the progress of this product avidly, so expect further updates in later issues.







REDESIGNED DRAGOON!

The graphics for the main character have been redesigned totally and boasts far more impressive texture-mapping.

The detail is quite impressive, even at this early stage, and the zooming perspectives certainly do the visuals plenty of justice.

The animation remains impressive and clearly a lot of effort has gone into making the movements of the main character very distinctive.

SONIC and AM2 team-up for new coin-op!

Hot news is emanating from the labs of acclaimed Sega coin-op creators, AM2. They have begun work on an all-new 3D fighting game using the same Model-2B technology as Fighting Vipers - but this time Sonic the Hedgehog is the star of the show.

AM2 Director Mr Suzuki and Sonic creator Mr Naka gave a recent joint-interview to discuss their plans for the project, which is currently in the very early stages of preparation. Says Mr Naka: "I just couldn't think of Sonic as a fighting game - I was worried about whether he could really fight, considering his large head and short arms... I was amazed at how smoothly Sonic moved - we were delighted. At this stage in development, I felt that if my early impressions were good and Mr Suzuki could make it this good, we would have no more worries." Mr Suzuki added: "If Mr Naka had disapproved, I'd have given up." ...



In the version shown, the graphics were at a very early stage, with only flat polygon renditions of Sonic and Tails duking it out on an early version of the infamous Green Hill Zone. The animation is superb, matching Fighting Vipers and VF2, but this time with the action firmly based in the realms of fantasy. AM2 can really let their imagination run riot.

The usual cast of Sonic characters - Tails, Knuckles and of course, Robotnik are planned to appear. However, Mr Naka personally requested that AM2 expand upon the characters and the Sonic world of Moebius and is looking forward to AM2's contribution. "Anyone who attempts a Sonic game has a duty to create new characters, so we shall have a go at one or two," said Mr Suzuki. Despite the usual rumours, the official word from AM2 on a Saturn conversion is that at the moment it is only "under consideration".

AC SEGA — NEW AM2 GAMES REVEALED! **"FIGHTING SONIC"** — AVAILABILITY TBA PRICE TBA





Details on the latest AM2 fighting game plus intriguing info on future arcade games!

SONIC TEAM DUE TO LAND ON SATURN

During the course of the now annual Sonic Team/AM2 joint-interview, several details emerged on the new *Saturn* project being developed by Mr Naka and the original Sonic Team. It's their first project since Megadrive Sonic and Knuckles after which the team left the US to return to Japan.

Having moved on from the preliminary working title of "Nights" or "Knights", the game is said to usher in a new level of 3D graphical excellence on the Sega Saturn. Asked about the project Sonic Team director Mr Naka said: "At present, we have the best staff and are working on the best action game... We hope to surprise you again as we did when we revealed the first Sonic game. We feel it'll be effective, so you can look forward to something good.". Sonic Team project director Mr Oshima remarked, "I think I can show you some graphics which you wouldn't believe possible with Saturn."

Details such as game genre and a release date are still unconfirmed but it is thought that the game is planned to be unveiled as soon as Nintendo go public in a big way with their Ultra wares. If there's one thing Sega aren't lacking at the moment, it's certainly confidence...



AM2 LEAK NEW PROJECT DETAILS

The Model-3 board is complete and Yu Suzuki is so happy with the technology that he has shown a very early 30% complete version of Virtua Fighter 3 to the Japanese press. Mr Suzuki has also started a very early "teaser" campaign in order to introduce a new character (see the appropriate caption) for the new game. The response from Japanese hacks to the new VF game has, not surprisingly, been ecstatic. The press saw an incomplete Lau performing his moves on the new Model-3 board and confirmed that the graphics bear an uncanny resemblance to the CG discs released over the last few months (see page 135 for the latest AM2 CG meisterwerks).

Other projects are currently being prepped for arcade releases, and heavy hints have been dropped about a Model-3 based Virtua Cop 3 due for the end of the year. Also, another AM2-originated road racing game is a hot contender, this time based around European supercars.



CALENDER HERALDS NEW VF CHARACTER

Lucky recipients of the new AM2 CG Virtua Fighter 1996 calender have been mystified by the appearance on an unknown character. A summary page at the back of the slick product shows tiny pieces of each CG portrait - the question is, who does this particular eye belong to? AM2 have confirmed that it is a new female character, but rumours that it's "Akira's sister" have been denied.

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The hungry wolves feed again in Real Bout FATAL FURY





The Bogard brothers are back for an unbelievable fifth appearance in the latest addition to the 'Legend of the Hungry Wolf' Fatal Fury fighting family. Real Bout Fatal Fury has been released into arcades across Japan, and is proving to be just as popular as the preceding games of this series. Neo Geo fans with unquenchable appetites for 2D fighting extravaganzas should start salivating immediately, as this promises to top all previous incarnations, and reaches the Japanese home market on January 13 (cartridge) and early February (CD version).

A quick glance around the page shows that the graphics have largely been left unchanged; the main differences lie in the storyline, characters and playability. The storyline follows on from the previous competition in a roundabout way with a scroll of mysterious documents falling into the hands of the revived Geese Howard. These documents are obviously in demand, as the Fatal Fury trio are out to take them back in another tournament-based fighting festival. But other contestants have appeared out of the shadows with their own secret agendas...

The game features the ten contestants from the previous competition as well as six newcomers (and of course, the possibility of hidden characters). As this is a Fatal Fury game, Terry, Andy and Joe all appear, as well as Kim Kaphan, Duck King, Blue Mary and the infamous Bob Wilson. Amongst the new blood we find Jin Chonrei and Jin Chonshu; brother and sister clad in oversized traditional overcoats, and a tall muscular lout known as Yamakazi.



Playability wise, this is a remodelling of the essential features that made previous Fatal Fury games so popular, with tweakings to the two-level rage gauge and other minor adjustments. The trade-mark combination attacks have been made substantially easier to achieve, leading to a more frenzied style of fight, and the 'over-sway' system of jumping into and out of the arena has been upgraded to allow three tiers of play (and pseudo 3D effects in mid-combat). The actual arenas themselves have received a slight tweaking with a variety of breakable objects placed at the perimeters. Once the objects are broken, fighting becomes more tense, as another hit of this type causes a 'ring out', and a different approach to fighting starts. Another criticism of Fatal Fury games was the problem with producing super-special attacks; known as 'Super Death Blows', and SNK seem to be taken this on board with easier-to-produce moves that are spectacular to behold.

From first impressions, this looks to be another Fatal Fury success story, but **MAXIMUM** is reserving judgment until the final product arrives. Until then, gather your strength in readiness for the ultimate encounter with the madman Geese Howard!

NG SNK — REAL BOUT FATAL FURY — AVAILABLE IN UK ARCADES NOW

NEO GEO SHORT STORIES

SNK are scheduled to release another CD-based console in Japan in the near future. Known as the CDZ, this redesigned games system is somewhat smaller and lighter in colouration; appearing to be closer to the design of the Sony PlayStation, whilst still retaining the classic Neo Geo 'look'. This appears to be the same machine as previously except for one important difference; the CD drive is double-speed, and thus the lengthy loading times can be avoided. The CDZ is not to be confused with the double-speed American model, or any 64-bit plans that SNK may have for the future.

PlayStation owners can now look forward to port-overs of Neo Geo games in a deal that initially encompasses three outstanding titles. The Sony machine is set to receive King of Fighters '95, Samurai Shodown 3 and Real Bout Fatal Fury, with other titles to follow. All the above games are due out this year (although the dates haven't been specified) and should provide a number of first rate 2D beat 'em up titles that the PlayStation so badly needs.

Rare heroes return in KILLER INSTINCT 2



British developers Rare are testing out near-complete versions of Killer Instinct 2 at selected arcades across the US, as they ready the game for an American release in a few months time. Featuring the same distinctive visuals that drew crowds to the first offering, Killer Instinct 2 has eleven selectable characters at the time of writing, along with numerous rendered backdrops and sparkling special moves. From these eleven fighters, three are entirely new; Tusk, Kim Wu and Maya. Tusk is a Barbarian from the northern wastes, whilst Kim Wu hails from a clan of Ninja and Maya appears to be a jungle vixen. As expected, an earlier version of the game featuring gratuitous use of female anatomy in the CG cut-scenes (Orchid's introduction was a particularly explicit example) was censored by the politically correct Nintendo of America, leading to a toned-down final version. More importantly, the gameplay has been revamped to include a power meter, fake manoeuvres, dashes and a damage percent rating after combos. Fans of the original will be pleased to note that those infamous combos are back with a vengeance, and from the interest on the internet, Killer 2 looks set to be a success when it finally makes it back to these shores.

Interestingly enough, Killer Instinct 2 is not being converted for the Nintendo Ultra 64 at the time of writing; as Rare seem to be working on a Ultra 64-only version with a true 3D arena instead of the pseudo 3D affair enjoyed by arcade goers in the English-speaking world. In Japan, however, Killer Instinct proved to be extremely unpopular to such an extent that there are no plans to release it on the Nintendo console in Japan. The **MAXIMUM** team is in agreement with the majority of Japanese gamers on this point: Killer Instinct relied too heavily on tedious button pressing for the 'awesome' combos, but we are ready to forgive and forget these failings providing the second instalment is substantially improved. We'll have more information as soon as we can, but for further information on this game, consult the February issue of Nintendo Magazine System.

PS NAMCO — MORE INFORMATION ON FUTURE CHART SMASH **RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION** AVAILABLE NOW IN **JAPAN** DUE FOR SPRING '96 RELEASE IN **UK**

VIVA LA REVOLUTION

RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

Huge numbers of PlayStation racing game fanatics throughout Japan are now the proud owners of Ridge Racer Revolution - arguably the finest racer ever seen on any of the super consoles. On December 3, exactly a year to the day since the Japanese launch of the PlayStation, Namco released the mother of all driving games, and MAXIMUM is pleased to report that the Japanese version is everything we expected it to be - and more.



The biggest change of all is the introduction of the Revolution course. This track has not featured in any other Namco racing game, and offers three distinct variations, all of which must be conquered before some of the game's many secrets can begin to be uncovered. Providing you've played the original before (and let's face it, who hasn't?), you'll know the method of selecting the extra courses; where you race the original track backwards against more competent drivers. Also present is the infamous mirror mode, where reflections of any track can be attempted.

The new course shares the scenic themes of the first Ridge Racer track, but is sufficiently different to entertain a second tidal wave of interest from owners of the original. The course begins on a central freeway, with a huge skyscraper looming upwards in the distance. After passing under this, you enter a short tunnel bearing left, before appearing next to a beach while a light aircraft buzzes off into the distance. Negotiating around the seaside area, your car climbs past a sprawling hotel before turning right, down through a valley. After a spectacular jump, a horribly sharp left corner needs expert skill to be swerved through, before a snaking stretch of roadway surrounded by sea in encountered. This ends in another sharp corner (this time to the right) before a blast through a long tunnel and the finishing straight of the city. From now on however, the action reaches new levels of tension, as you'll discover when witnessing the turns of the roadways on the Advanced and Expert tracks.

A multitude of twists, turns, tunnels and torments are featured in this unbelievable Namco racing game!!



The tracks are not the only aspect of the game that the Namco programmers have spent a vast amount of time tweaking to get just right. The option screens are some of the most user friendly ever seen in a video game, and the excellent range of changes show just how profession a job Namco has made. After your initial car selection (where any of the cars and tracks can be viewed from almost any angle), you may choose the type of model (which also acts as a guide for the drone cars' top speed), track and finally choice of race. The race type is chosen from three different options; a twelve-car driving frenzy, a two(or three)-car time trial where the speed limits hit an all-time high, and an endurance mode used for practising a particular course where yours is the sole car. A final decision rests in your hands once certain secrets have been acquired - you can even change the time of day for your race from noon to night!

FACE OFF AGAINST THE DEVILS AND AN ANGEL!!

Hidden away are the real stars of the game - the ultimate racing vehicles. Ridge Racer Revolution features not one but three hidden extra cars, taking the total number of controllable vehicles to a massive 15! Aside from the initial four cars, there are another eight to select after the Galaga '88 start-up screen, bringing the

Revisit the original Ridge Racer track in the head-to-head link-up battle!



EXTRA COURSE BONANZA!

The sequel to PlayStation Ridge Racer features more courses than ever before, and in keeping with the first title, there are extra tracks to complete once you've mastered the three initial courses.







A TRIPLE HELPING OF SECRET CARS!

One of the excellent secrets of the original Ridge Racer PlayStation game was the option to race as the infamous 13th Racing Devil car. For Ridge Racer Revolution, the developers have pulled out all the stops and have added two extra cars for even more motorised mayhem. Of particular note is the fantastic White Angel, which has the finest overall performance of any car seen so far. What's even more exciting is that all the extra cars can be saved to memory card, and they can even be raced against one another in the awesome two-player mode. Other smaller items of interest have come to light; you may, for example, switch off the rear-view mirror, and also pan in and out in the external mode. Look for an in-depth and complete guide in a forthcoming issue!









MAXIMUM discovers the three hidden cars in Ridge Racer Revolution! Can you locate the super-speedy White Angel Car?

RIDGE RACER SHORT STORIES

A fine Techno soundtrack accompanies this fantastic racing fest, and so entertaining are these tracks, that MAXIMUM has formulated the top five tunes of Ridge Racer Revolution. So without further ado, don your woollen bobble hat, struggle into a pair of dancing pantaloons and wave your hands in the air to the following top five Revolution Rave anthems...

5 ROTTERDAM NATION '94 - This "kerazy" hyper-techno reworking of the original is sure to set the heartbeats racing and a great way to kick off your "triple-R" experience. Listen out for samples from the Rotterdam Termination Source's absurd "Poing" record.

4 FEELING OVER REMIX - A harder edge to this classic Ridge Racer number is present in this remix, and galvanises your racing into a toe-tapping frenzy.

3 LORDS OF TECHNO - The music bods at Namco have obviously been 'influenced' by The Prodigy and it shows; the middle portion of this track tips a beanie hat to the "Experience" track; "Fire", and definitely "carries a little bit of clout"...

2 RARE HERO 2 - The best track from the first Ridge Racer game gets an extensive overhaul which even features a techno-enhanced version of the Pac-man theme halfway through it. The memorable tune is now sounding even more hip, daddio...

1 MAXIMUM ZONE - The Rave War festival comes to a close with a laid-back dance track to cool you down after the brain-numbing BPM of previous tracks. Time for a lie-down and listen this fabulous mellow vibe with a great name to match...

total to twelve. However, after these become available, the fun begins in earnest with three mysterious cars entering the Ridge Racer competition. Although we haven't specified how these ultra cars can be selected, we can reveal their exact specifications.

First off the starting grid is the Racing 13, or 'Devil' car as it come to be known. This is the phenomenally speedy secret car of the first Ridge Racer game, and grips the road like no other vehicle ever seen. The handling of this frankly supernatural racing model is the finest seen, and the maximum speed is bewildering. The other two cars are completely new, and the first of these is the Chibi Devil, or 'Little Devil' car. This sporty version of the Devil car has the fastest acceleration of any car in Ridge Racer Revolution with a top speed to match. However, it corners and grips the road like a donkey, and is essentially a suped-up version of the four Solvalou cars. The final secret car is the awesome White Angel; a car that even surpasses the abilities of the Devil vehicle. An attractive white sporting model with a blue angel motive, this has the fastest top speed (an amazing 286 kph), acceleration and superior handling that puts all other cars to shame. Only the grip is average; but this is a blessing when negotiating the winding tracks of the Revolution course, as power-sliding is easy to achieve and therefore bends are less of a problem. Could this be the ultimate driving machine in Ridge Racer Revolution? It certainly looks that way for now...



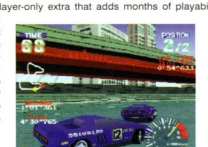
THE WHITE ONE

The White Angel is first seen when you complete the first three courses – it zooms past all the other stationary cars at the end of the victory sequence. Then it's up to you to challenge the mysterious drivers of the three secret cars in the time trial mode. Obtaining this flash of white lightning is no easy task, but once achieved, you'll never want to drive another car again!

GO HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH THE UNBELIEVABLE LINK-UP MODE!

The icing on the cake is what fans of the original had been up in arms about for months - a serial-linked two player game of Ridge Racer. This is what Namco have delivered, and some members of the **MAXIMUM** team reckon it plays better than WipeOut. Once you've connected your Japanese PlayStations together (along with the necessary televisions and cabling), the game automatically recognises the serial link and informs you of the extra features.

The link-up option is what the vast majority of PlayStation owners will be buying this game for, and the extended features (such as a handicap mode for beginners) present in two-player mode doesn't disappoint. As the screen shots indicate, the original Ridge Racer course (plus the extended version of it) is a two-player-only extra that adds months of playability to an already in-depth and enthralling driving title. Adding to the lastability is the fact that there are a total of 15 different cars (that we've found so far) for both players to access via various hidden cheats, although there are only four to begin with. Namco should feel justly proud of creating what to some is the greatest driving game ever seen outside the arcades.





MAXIMUM invades Namco R&D headquarters!
RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION development team quizzed!

The Japanese development team members involved in the creation of Ridge Racer Revolution were kind enough to speak to **MAXIMUM** from Namco R&D headquarters in Yokohama. In this in-depth interview, members of the Ridge Racer Revolution development team talk about all aspects of the game, and offer some interesting news on the future of Ridge Racer...

MAXIMUM Congratulations on another excellent racing title. Could you tell us a little more about the reasons behind the production of this game?
RRR Team When we produced the original Ridge Racer [on the PlayStation], our aim was to make a straight conversion from the arcade version. This time, when we produced Ridge Racer Revolution, we wanted to add as many features as possible for the console, so that people could enjoy a more in-depth game. That's the apparent reason behind producing Ridge Racer Revolution and why we didn't attempt a straight conversion of Ridge Racer 2 or Rave Racer. Also for Revolution, we added the new race courses. By doing that, people who enjoy the arcade games (and the arcade Ridge Racer series) can also enjoy the new Ridge Racer with the new race courses.



MAXIMUM What preparation was made for the actual programming?
RRR Team We made the preliminary designs which we call the "free run" program, in order to make the exciting and original courses, and also verified them to see just how fast we could make the cars run at high speed.

MAXIMUM How long did it take to program Ridge Racer Revolution?
RRR Team About eight months.

MAXIMUM Can you break that down into graphical design and programming time?
RRR Team It's difficult to do that as both these continued throughout the whole time period. Regarding the sound, the music mostly comes from Ridge Racer 2, so the sound took less time than the game. Once we have our graphic programming design, we can divide it into specific periods.

MAXIMUM How many people were involved in development?
RRR Team There were over 20 people in the development team and most people were newly gathered just for the PlayStation version.

MAXIMUM So it was decided to have a new team just to work on PlayStation game development?
RRR Team This team was gathered for Revolution, but each of the staff has been working on other console games. The detail of the graphics show the improvement in our skills and technique.

MAXIMUM Did you encounter any difficulties with the PlayStation hardware?
RRR Team Well, the main difficulties were with the link-up mode, running the program at high speed, and the inclusion of the rear-view mirror. However, we showed a version at the PlayStation Expo, and this was very well accepted by the many people attending. It was one of the biggest events of the show which we were very happy about.

MAXIMUM You have said that the idea of Revolution was to create a new game, and therefore you wanted to use as many facilities as the machine can offer. How much time prior to programming did the team spend exploring the capabilities of the PlayStation?
RRR Team This may seem extreme, but really we just kept going, and did not know until the end whether we could do the high speed or not - the programmers tried desperately hard with that. Of course, at the beginning, we felt that we could possibly do the high speed. This was for about one or two months. Then after that we were confident to a certain extent that we could do it. Really, there were no times when we felt we could not do it.

MAXIMUM Have you changed the car dynamics at all, such as the realism of the braking and acceleration?
RRR Team The actual handling is really like arcade Ridge Racer, but the drift

"When we produced Ridge Racer Revolution, we wanted to add as many features as possible for the console. By doing that, people who enjoy the arcade games can also enjoy the new Ridge Racer with the new courses."





feeling is like Ridge Racer 2.

MAXIMUM What about the intelligence of the enemy cars - has that changed?
RRR Team Basically there are two new enemy cars. Compared to the originals, some features of the new cars have had increases, some decreases; to get the right balance.

MAXIMUM Was this the reason you included the rear-view mirror
RRR Team Yes, with the rear-view mirror; you can interrupt the person in the car behind you, and this technique is used for link-up modes. When you compete with someone else you enjoy the play more.



arcade Ridge Racer and Rave Racer.

MAXIMUM Some of the music has been heard before (in Ridge Racer 2) - are there any RRR-only tracks, and have you any plans to release the music in a remixed audio CD (as they are very popular in Japan)?
RRR Team There are some specific tracks, and the other music is the same



"We collected an enormous amount of background material; including books on design and construction. To create the feeling of horror we needed to have a solid background, so we choose a European-style house."

MAXIMUM Let's move on to the in-game music.This is some of the finest heard in a game - what bands or groups influenced you in the creation of the tunes?
RRR Team There is no particular band nor group which we were influenced by in the creation of the tunes.

MAXIMUM The music sounds very European and dancey - is that type of music very popular in Japan?
RRR Team Yes, it is very popular in Japan, too!

MAXIMUM How many people were involved in the music composition?
RRR Team A total of four musicians, who were responsible for arcade Ridge Racer 2 and also did the music for as the Ridge Racer 2 coin-op. An audio CD (but not a remixed one) has already been released in Japan.

MAXIMUM In the development of Ridge Racer 1 and 2, did you work from any graphics libraries which other games could use for development (like a graphics engine or the Sega Graphics Library)?
RRR Team Namco has had cooperation from Sony for a graphics library, but when making good games the standard libraries have limitations, so specialised ones have to be developed. We did one for Ridge Racer, so we are making a basic library.

MAXIMUM Talking of Sega, how do you rate Sega Rally Championship on the Saturn?
RRR Team Our answer is simple - Sega is doing a good job.



MAXIMUM What are your plans for future software titles? If Ridge Racer 3 was made, would you gather the same team together or would you use different people?
RRR Team Not all staff would be gathered again - some we'd say Sayonara to - but others would come back so they could pass information and know-how on. Actually, we have started a new racing game, but at this moment it is not Ridge Racer 3. It is not a sequel, but it is a racing game.

MAXIMUM Now let's talk about game secrets. We found the Racing #13, Racing Kid and Angel cars. Are these the correct names and what cars were they designed from?
RRR Team The English names haven't been decided yet. Chibi Devil is the correct name for Racing Kid. Angel car should be White Angel. We simply based them on racing cars, but not specific ones.

MAXIMUM Your inclusion of the original course is good. Can you access it in one-player mode?
RRR Team No.

MAXIMUM Why did you decide to make the original course only available in two-player mode, and are there any specific secrets in this mode?
RRR Team As we said before, this game isn't a conversion of our coin-op, Ridge Racer 2, so we had no plan to include this specification at first. However, we would like to present this specification to the people who play this game in link-up mode, because they have to arrange two RRR games, two PlayStations, televisions and a link-up cable.

MAXIMUM Are there any game secrets that we haven't found yet?
RRR Team We can say that there are some, but we can't say what.

MAXIMUM Thank you very much for your time. Does any of your team have any final comments?
Mr Akira Nakayama (Senior Programmer) As I said before, we had a hard time with the high-speed processing and the link-up. Right to the end, this was tough for us, but I was confident with what I could do.
Mr Hiroyuki Onoda (Designer) This time we made an original course which was a challenge.
Mr Shiro Wada (Graphics) This time we wanted to make not just a racing game, but an entertaining one where the player has time to see the excellent background. So this is something we gave thought to.
Mr Kazumi Mizuno (Director) I'm not from Sony, but I like the link mode, so people should buy two machines and two games. It was not a marketing decision, but we felt that the level of graphics would go down with a split-screen and we didn't want to compromise the quality. The other reason is that the link-up mode is technically more difficult than the split-screen, so we wanted to meet the challenge of this difficult feature.

MAXIMUM Thank you.

The latest news on the KING'S FIELD saga!

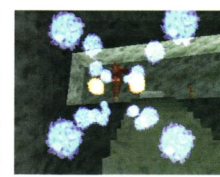






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KING'S FIELD 2
AVAILABLE SOMETIME THIS YEAR!

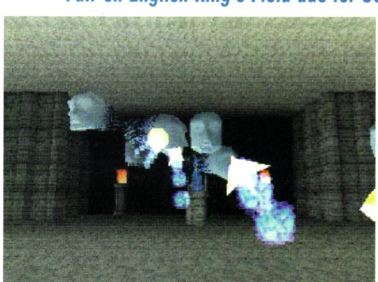
The first true next generation role playing adventure for the Sony PlayStation is gaining two new additions, as gamers across the globe galvanise themselves for a veritable King's Field onslaught.



Firstly, MAXIMUM is pleased to announce that King's Field 2 is receiving an English translation followed by an American release, so that RPG fanatics across the States can get to grips with the classic and involving gameplay without the initial confusion of bewildering Japanese text. With a US release scheduled by the end of March by Ascii, **MAXIMUM** is certain that Sony will snap this one up for a British release like lightning - they certainly should considering the serious lack of PlayStation RPGs. It would be a real and utter waste if this title failed to materialise on these shores. Are you listening, Sony?

Although lacking some of the graphical finesse of other polygon-based titles, King's Field more than makes up for this with an involving plot and a huge game life. The magical attacks that your character is endowed with are some of the most spectacular, and the more powerful entities encountered in the final battle are amongst the most impressive we've seen. The time is most definitely right for an adventure to Melanat island for a spot of questing.

Full-on English King's Field due for US release! How much longer until a UK launch?



King's Field 2 received the **MAXIMUM** Extended Play treatment last issue, and this proved to be extremely popular judging by the number of queries we received from owners of the Japanese version regarding the many fiendish locations and magical items. Having played the English language version of the game, we can safely say that this is an outstanding graphical adventure that should definitely appeal to role playing fans. Be prepared to invest sizable quantities of your social life into forging ahead with the mammoth quest to locate the fabled moonlight sword. Forget Arc the Lad; this is what role-playing should be all about!





Development starts on KING'S FIELD 3!

More exciting still is the late-breaking news relating to the development of King's Field 3 in Japan. Details are scarce, and the screenshots are taken from a 30 percent complete version of the game, but what we are able to tell you is the the adventure follows on from the second story (as one might expect), and the graphical locations have been improved over the first two games. There is a variety of new non-player characters and monsters to encounter (including the stout mace-wielding dwarf), a number of new and impressive-looking weapons and armour and devastating magic, but the main graphical difference lies in the new outdoor locations. As you can see, the developers From Software have actually included fields in King's Field this time, along with huts and a plethora of outhouses and cavern systems to investigate. All this helps to create the finest-looking King's Field quest seen so far, and Japanese gamers are sure to lap up the finished version when it arrives at some stage during 1996. **MAXIMUM** will be following the progress of this fine-looking role-playing game in the next issue.



FIRST SHOT!
We've been in direct contact with From Software in Japan and can exclusively unveil the first work on King's Field 3 (left). A full report is promised for MAXIMUM issue #4, where full details on this potentially stunning game will emerge.

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MAXIMUM is a monthly video games magazine aimed at the die-hard player owning the next generation of games technology. Staff are required for this title who have a genuine interest and in-depth knowledge about video games. If that isn't you, please don't apply. The following positions are available:

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If you're a Macintosh literate designer with experience of Quark Xpress, Adobe Photoshop and Aldus Freehand, we could well be interested in employing the use of your artistic talents.

As well as accomplished Mac skills, the successful candidate will also have a genuine interest and enthusiasm for video games and won't be afraid of making demands from the writing staff - for the good of the magazine. Therefore, the successful applicant will also need excellent communication skills. It's a difficult, demanding position, but for someone who is really into video games it could be the perfect opportunity to mix your favourite hobby with a worthwhile career in publishing.

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MAXIMUM aims to recruit a Deputy Editor to help produce the most in-depth video games magazine on the market. The successful candidate has a near encyclopaedic knowledge of video games, along with some basic knowledge of Quark Xpress. A few years' experience of journalism in the video games industry would be extremely useful, although not totally essential. Other requirements are a sound grasp of the English language and pronounced sub-editing and production skills. Examples of your work should be enclosed with your CV.

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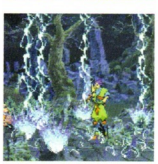
GUARDIAN HEROES

Gunstar Heroes. Alien Soldier. Dynamite Headdy. These games are incredibly good Sega Megadrive titles all created by one talented Japanese software house - Treasure. With the 16-bit machine well behind them, Treasure have moved onto the Saturn in real style with their debut title: Guardian Heroes. MAXIMUM reports.



Megadrive masters Treasure take their talents to the Sega Saturn!

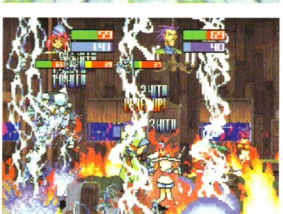




Take a look at Treasure's back catalogue and you can see an array of technically superlative games. The company were able to take 16-bit hardware to its very limits with some of the most stunningly huge bosses ever seen. The mid-level action on all of the games was also superlative, with huge amounts of sprites inhabiting the screen. Now, the Saturn's sprite and backdrop handling capabilities are so advanced, that just about any one can match what Treasure were up to with their previous games. It's a good thing therefore that the company's expert gameplay prowess once again comes to the fore with Guardian Heroes.

The basic premise of the game is as follows. One or two players undertake a vast adventure based around a series of horizontally scrolling levels. A substantial amount of depth is given to each level through the use of various playfields which lead further back "into" the screen. Using the shoulder buttons on the joypad enables you to jump between the different layers. As you might imagine, there is a large amount of sprite-scaling involved - something that the Saturn can handle with consummate ease. The backdrops are all scaled, as is each and every sprite on-screen. This gives rise to a very original look and feel to the game.

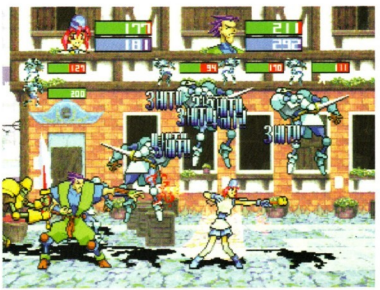
Four characters are there for the controlling - each with excellent names such as Hahn Samuel, Randy M Green, Ibushi Giniro and Nicola Neil. Each fighter has their own range of moves along with their own personal characteristics. For example, Nicola is a bit



Guardian Heroes features excellent simultaneous SIX-PLAYER versus mode action!









The Saturn's sprite-scaling and rotational capabilities are taken to new heights in this exciting new release from Sega - Guardian Heroes is going to be hot!







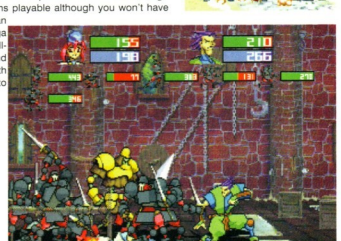


weak on the physical side but has immense magical powers whereas burly Hahn is the exact opposite, with a huge range of attacks but only one puny magical spell at his disposal. Other characters derive magic from artifacts carried - for example, Randy's psychic quotient is upped significantly thanks to his mystical staff. What this all boils down to is that Guardian Heroes offers mucho variety in its gameplay - the characters are truly unique. There's no Ryu and Ken-style similarity between any of the heroes - each one is significantly different to warrant specific playing styles.

The majority of the action is combat based, in a style reminiscent, but far in advance of Sega's aged Golden Axe coin-op. Each of the characters is decked out with a wide range of special attacks - full moves lists will follow in the Guardian Heroes Extended Play that's currently scheduled for **MAXIMUM** issue #4 - suffice to say that these guys have more special moves and techniques than the average Street Fighter or X-Man. Adding to the replay factor is that decisions can be made at the end of some levels - for example, you may decide to continue on the same route or pursue the end-of-level boss which just got away.

Combine this excellent combat action with an in-depth RPG storyline and we think you'll agree that Guardian Heroes is shaping up to be one of the premiere Saturn releases of 1996.

The Japanese version of the game is scheduled to hit importers at the end of the January, but it must be said that there is a fair amount of Japanese text to wade through which may put some people off (the game remains playable although you won't have much of a clue about the storyline). **MAXIMUM** can reveal that the game has been well-received at Sega Europe HQ and an official version complete with all-English text is well in development as we speak and should be out in March or April. Combined with Panzer Dragoon 2, Guardian Heroes is bound to raise the Saturn's profile still further in early 1996.



TREASURE SHORT STORIES

MAXIMUM hasn't exactly been backward in coming forward about the severe lack of use most of the Saturn's peripherals have. Top of the list must be the six-player tap, which is only compatible with one or two rather crap titles. However, finally there is a good game that uses the device... Guardian Heroes.

An excellent Versus Mode exists in the game that enables up to six players to have an enormous great fight. A variety of different characters are available to use, including the rabbit pet of Randy M Green is controllable - and he's got some magic powers and special moves of his own to unleash on his opponents. Although the prospect of simultaneous six-player beat 'em up sounds preposterous, it has to be said that the results are extremely impressive and most playable indeed. Full details emerge in the next issue of the mag.

IT'S GOLDEN AXE, INNIT?

No, actually. Guardian Heroes features a vast, sprawling landscape, multiple routes through each level and much more intense combat action. The characters have a huge array of combat moves at their disposal along with role-playing game style attributes. At the end of each stage, it's possible to boost the capabilities of your character by using experience points to improve, say, strength or magical powers.

Guardian Heroes successfully brings aspects from numerous game genres together to provide a startlingly original gameplay experience. Expect a big push from Sega Europe when this gets its official release in the Spring.

THE EVIL HAS LANDED

RESIDENT EVIL

Work continues apace on what looks to be the finest 3D polygon adventure title yet seen on any platform; Resident Evil (known as Biohazard in Japan). Following our in-depth news coverage in issue two, MAXIMUM has obtained a 60 percent complete version of the game and has visited Capcom's Japanese headquarters to interview those involved in the project. This most recent version of Resident Evil is much more advanced than the previous sampler we played, and includes a wealth of new details that add a new dimension to this terrifying game.



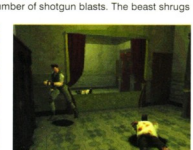


The reason for your team's exploration has been fleshed out and explained in an all-new (and extremely cheesy) full-motion video featuring a quartet of B-movie stars. The action is set in July 1998, and your group of STAR combat veterans from the 'Raccoon Police Department' (known as Alpha team) have taken to the skies to search for the 'Star' Bravo team who in turn were sent to investigate a series of bizarre murders.

Flying over the remote Raccoon Forest, you spot a plume of smoke, and land to investigate. After a brief search of the area, you find the Bravo team's downed helicopter with an entire supply of ammunition still intact. Weirder still are the snarling noises from the surrounding hillside. You decide to search the tall grass for any other clues, and your newest recruit finds a pistol stuck in the mud with a hand attached to it! He pulls the gun from the mire and lets out a scream of terror when the hand comes away at the wrist. Then in a blur of claws and fangs, a large wolf-like beast leaps onto the rookie, who shrieks and lets off a number of shotgun blasts. The beast shrugs these off and rents him apart, with blood and gore spilling everywhere.

Running to investigate the noise, your team of three arrive to find the rookie's twitching corpse, but there is no time to mourn - the helicopter has flown off and there are more beasts waiting to pounce. You decide to sprint into the darkness with the creatures in hot pursuit, and the situation is beginning to look hopeless; until you spot a dark mansion appearing from the gloom. You run into the hallway and lock the door behind you. Perhaps this mansion holds the key...?









UNCOVER THE DEADLY SECRETS LYING WITHIN THE MANSION

A lot has changed since **MAXIMUM** played through the sample demo. Firstly, the interaction is a lot more comprehensive; there are now numerous items to pick up including keys, health (in the form of spray cans) and of course, guns. The guns now have limited ammunition; an addition we found out to our cost, whilst the keys only open doors of a similar colour.

We also found many places in the now-complete mansion that could not be accessed, and a huge number of different sections had been added; including a cave system, a guardhouse, a helipad and a hideous mutation chamber! Other new additions include a set-piece animation the first time you bump into a feasting zombie and venture outside the mansion, and a cunning number of set piece puzzles to solve, such as playing the piano, and obtaining the shotgun without being pulped. Various sections of the mansion have been swapped around, so that rooms lead to unexpected areas, and some of the mansion's many beasties have been transferred to other areas, meaning that our creep through a hallway (in order to ambush the giant spider) turned into a run for cover when a couple of zombie Dobermans crashed through the windows instead.

Character wise, the game has been tweaked so that it plays somewhat differently depending on which operative you choose. The female 'Star' member Jill Valentine has more to offer than Chris Redfield as she can carry eight items (compared to Chris's six), and unlocks a variety of doors due to her expert lock-picking abilities. Chris, meanwhile, can uncover a barricaded 'Star' member from the Bravo team; the nymph-like Rebecca Chambers. Both the characters seem (at this

Loads more monsters and rooms have been added since our report last issue!

DOGS EAT SPIDER!
When our STAR team member entered the decaying hallway, we were quietly confident that the giant spider would pose no problem this time. Unfortunately, the cunning developers moved the green arachnid to another area, and left Chris to deal with a triple helping of frothing hounds instead. These zombie dobermans proved extremely attentive and pursued Chris with canine determination, before being blown to pieces with a trusty shotgun.



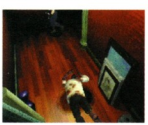
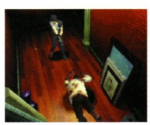









SEEK THE SACRED SHIELD!
This small ante-chamber held one of the many artifacts contained in the game. Initially difficult to spot, the shield nestled in a statue, and a quick spot of simple lateral thinking lead our heroine to acquire a set of rickety steps which was pushed to the desired position. Now what do we do with this shield...?



ZOMBIE DECAPITATION!
After negotiating a rather tasteful red curtain, Jill found herself in a crimson closet, complete with comatose zombie. There was still life in the decaying corpse as it grabbed her ankle and chomped away. Not standing for this, Jill shook herself free and planted a firm foot right in the undead's head - which flew off to our amusement!

Creep through the dank darkness in a quest to locate imprisoned STAR members!

stage in development) to be able to enter unique sections of the gaming area, and both are interesting to play. Other minor enhancements include a pondering stance when you leave the game unpaused, and larger numbers of in-game chats with team coordinator Barry Burton (leading from one exploration to another). Finally the characters have now been given the ability to push large items of furniture around the room to reveal secret hiding places.

AN ADVANCED GUIDE TO MANSION MONSTERS

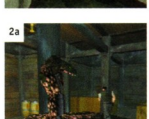
If you thought that the many foul fiends found in the preliminary version were gruesome enough, prepare for terror beyond measure as we present some of the more powerful beasts that Resident Evil has to offer.

1. Zombie Doberman - These are first encountered in the introduction when they rip apart the hapless rookie team member, and also prowl and scamper throughout the mansion. They are extremely fast, but easily avoided as they turn in a very wide arc. We met three of them on an outside balcony where they couldn't be dodged, and were ripped to shreds; a swift demise that ended with one of the hounds grabbing our character and shaking him by the throat until his neck cracked. Bringing a pistol to bear results in dog death after about seven bullets, and they yelp pitifully as they take each bullet. The movement here is just excellent; as the dogs snap backwards, whimpering and twitching on the ground with great realism.

1b



2a



2. Giant Snake - The real star of the first version of Resident Evil makes another slithering appearance in a different part of the tumbling mansion. Upon entering a dimly-lit storage room, we were slightly disturbed at a low hissing sound, and this fear changed to blind panic when the huge purple giant serpent rose up from behind some boxes. We tried in vain to collect an item from the room, and then foolishly engaged the beast in hand-to-hand combat; a phenomenal mistake as it resulted in our character being eaten (except for the legs which were bitten off). Despite our demise, we were still overwhelmed by the quality of the animation (and crunching sounds of our death), but this is just a taster of what was to come.

1a

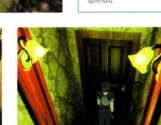


2b



ALERT! ALERT!
There are monsters absolutely everywhere in this version of Resident Evil! Most deserving of a portion was the giant snake; an awesome entity that has now taken up residence in a decaying storage room. The death scene involving the snake is really quite splendid.




4a


3

Small Snakes - In the dank dark mouldy cave chambers in a newly-discovered area, we accidentally trod on a small slithering black snake. Usually in these type of games, small animated snakes are just an eye-catching part of the scenery; but not so in Resident Evil as our hero received a hefty chomp to the boot.

3. Plant Tendrils - We stumbled upon some twitching shrubbery planted around a fountain in an upstairs balcony. It didn't take long for us to discover that these tendrils were alive, as we received a (quite enjoyable) whipping from the branches. After some cunning lateral thinking, we poisoned the plant, and connected the key it was guarding, before continuing with our expedition.

4. Mammoth Spider - As mentioned previously, a whole new series of outhouses have been programmed into this version of Resident Evil, and these areas proved to contain the most frightening monsters of all. After an exploration into a cave system full of Mutant Lizardmen, we headed for a metal door to escape their slimy claws, and quickly dived inside. Instead of a quiet hidey-hole stocked full ammunition, we sat in open-mouthed astonishment as the biggest spider ever seen in a video game scuttled into view. As you can tell from

Giant spiders that will suck your brains out through your ears!


4b


4c


4d


4e

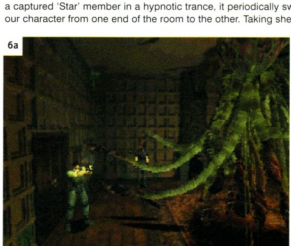
the screenshots, this beast of an arachnid filled the whole screen and moved with the grace and speed you would expect from this game. Unsure of our actions, we faced the purple monstrosity in a Mexican stand-off until we recovered from our initial shock, and loaded up the shotgun. Blowing the legs off huge spiders is immensely satisfying, and we followed this by unloading slug after slug into the massive prone body, which burst and split apart, showering us with white baby spiders that were destroyed in another frenzy of stomping.


5a


5b

5. Hornets - In exploring the new guardhouse complex, we interrupted a spot of hive building by some particularly stressed hornets. These killer insects took offence to our accidental blundering and swarmed about, stinging ferociously until we ran off, unsure of how to kill them.

6. Plant Monstrosity - The guardhouse has more that its fair share of terrifying secrets, and the biggest of the lot was a gigantic thrashing Cthuloid monstrosity with a giant throbbing head! Holding a captured 'Star' member in a hypnotic trance, it periodically swung great tentacles about, knocking our character from one end of the room to the other. Taking shelter in the far corners of the room our plucky adventurer made a decision to empty every weapon we had into the gross deformity. A dozen shotgun blasts and two full clips from the automatic had managed to blow several of the swinging tentacles clean off but the creature was still alive! Wonder what would happen if all the tentacles were to be destroyed...? Out of ammo and declining a long and constricting death, the **MAXIMUM** team decided to explore the secret laboratory itself.


6a


6b


6c


6d


7a


7b


8a


8b

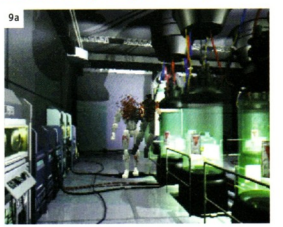
Hideous mutant creations spawned from evil and thirsting for your tasty flesh!

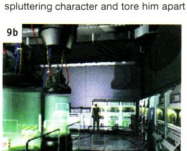
Experimental Mutations - Resident Evil's most horrific creations were met at the end of our exploration, and these were the various mutations roaming about the derelict laboratory. Three types of hideous humanoids were present; small leaping beastlings, a large black bio-humanoid, and a large white bio-humanoid.

7. Leaping Beastlings - A narrow and steel-plated corridor contained a number of grey haunched creatures that leapt to their feet and lolloped towards us with glee. These are fast but easy to dodge, and pack a hefty punch if your character is too slow. Blast them both with the shotgun and the shambling muties spring onto the ceiling! Aim upwards and shoot them back down to earth or run, the choice is yours!

8. Black Bio-humanoid - A stroll on the laboratory heli-pad turned into a sprint for survival as we disturbed a seven foot tall black mutation. Moving like lightning, he darted towards us with large talons outstretched, and caught us with a sharp stab to the midriff. This was our cue to run like crazy for the doorway, and leave the gaunt killing machine swiping at air.

9. White Bio-humanoid - Located in the central mutation chamber was a towering white figure that strode towards our 'Star' member with a purpose - to skewer us with his long pointed talons! Impervious to the heaviest of gunfire, this chap shrugged off ten (!) shotgun blasts and still kept on coming. We ran out of shotgun shells, and switched to the trusty pistol, planting 15 bullets into him. With still no effect, we showed no fear and pulled out a knife, stabbing ineffectually at the huge foe. The white terror retaliated with a dramatic talon thrust that passed though our pathetic defences and into our character's chest. Disgraceful death-spasms ensued as the bio-humanoid lifted up our spluttering character and tore him apart in a death scene too gruesome to describe...


9a


9b


9c


9d

BIO-HUMANOID MELTDOWN!

The newly-programmed laboratory featured the largest number of rock-hard and supremely detailed combat monsters yet seen in this title. The most menacing of these had to be the white bio-humanoid; the result of inhuman genetic experimentation. Moving with unnatural swiftness, this eight-foot tall ultimate portion-deliverer took great pleasure in dealing blow after blow into our combat veteran. Elsewhere, the other major entity that took our breath away was the huge plant being with a massive bulbous head. This was yet another monstrosity that our character received horrendous punishment from.

RESIDENT EVIL - CAPCOM'S FINEST HOUR?

This is shaping up to be the most awesome 3D polygon adventure title of 1996, and with the added depth of items, traps, puzzles and wide variety of monsters, the gameplay is set to match the outstanding visuals. The scene is set for Capcom to retake the mantle as one of the world's premiere software houses after a number of mediocre titles, as they begin to take control of the extra power afforded by the 32-bit systems.

Aside from the gruesome entities contained in the mansion and the surrounding grounds, the actual rooms offer their own share of surprises. In one, for example, you must shift three stone statues in order to unlock a secret chest, whilst another puzzling chamber has your character collecting a gem from a very secret place.

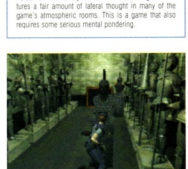
This potential that the PlayStation offers can already be seen in Capcom's recently-released Street Fighter Zero. Japanese gamers have the option to view an outstanding rolling demo of Resident Evil as a bonus, and this features a taste of the gothic horror that **MAXIMUM** has lavished upon you in these pages. The excellent video footage also shows some brand new weaponry (such as a marvellous flamethrower) and some fine close-up shots of Jill wading through some radioactive sewage.

The only potential spanner in the works is the age-old problem of blood and guts. As **MAXIMUM** understands it, Sony of Japan is taking a tough line regarding the amount of exploding red stuff in Resident Evil; asking the programmers to tone down various elements of the game and to make the blood a "grey" colour. This stance is at odds with Sony of America's 'no holds barred' approach, and has so far resulted in green blood for the zombies, but little other major changes.



CHAMBERS OF PUZZLEMENT

Aside from the variety of mutants to kill, the game features a fair amount of lateral thought in many of the game's atmospheric rooms. This is a game that also requires some serious mental pondering.





The second CAPCOM R&D INTERVIEW
MAXIMUM discovers the intent behind the evil!

In order to gain the most extensive coverage possible, **MAXIMUM** visited Capcom's Japanese headquarters in Tokyo and spoke to Tatsuya Minami; the Senior Manager of the Product Planning Section involved in the programming of Resident Evil. Our in-depth interview revealed some of the inspirations of the programmers, secrets of the game, and plans for the finished version, as well as an interesting surprise or two...

MAXIMUM What is the origin of Resident Evil?
Mr Minami This goes back about five years. There was a game called "Sweet Ghost" in which we had wanted to create a kind of mansion of horror; a haunted house.

MAXIMUM How popular is real horror in Japan?
Mr Minami Many people have a hidden propensity for it, though this should not be expressed openly because there are moral factors.



MAXIMUM Let's talk about the background to Resident Evil. We said in our news feature that it was some secret experiment which caused the mutations of the animals and created the zombies. Is that correct? If so, what is the final aim of the game once you have rescued the characters, and what inspired you to create this title?
Mr Minami It is correct. The aim is to get out of the mansion. To create the feeling of horror we needed to have a solid background, so we chose a European-style house. Personally speaking, I've been to America and England many times, where I visited stately homes in the country, and actually felt quite frightened! Our other inspirations came from ghost stories. They are part of a country's culture, and each country has a few famous ones. But in Japan, unlike other countries, we don't have stories with religious intent. In Japan, religion doesn't play a large part in daily life so much, so the concept of the Devil and so on is not really evident in Japan, whereas in Europe there are many stories based on this type of theme.

MAXIMUM How did you create the mansion in the game? Was it difficult, and did you use an architect at all?
Mr Minami No, not at all. We collected an enormous amount of background material which we studied; including books on design and construction.

MAXIMUM So the layout of the mansion was available before you started?
Mr Minami Yes, we talked about how we wanted the house to be. The planner had an image of the house onto which we firstly mapped out a plan view of the rooms. Then we positioned partitions and decided on the layout of the rooms before finally deciding on the kind of walls and doors that we wanted. We had to redo it many times.

MAXIMUM Was the mapping the most complicated part of the game, or was it the character construction?
Mr Minami Both tasks were difficult. The mapping was difficult because we had to be careful not to make any loopholes or contradictions to the storyline. Therefore we had to redo it many times. As for the characters, it was the first time we made 3D characters, and we had problems with texturing.

MAXIMUM Regarding the weapons in the game, in the sample version that we played, we start off with the knife and the automatic, and we've collected the revolver and a shotgun. Are there other weapons that can be found dur-

"The game is basically an action one, but we wanted to put in demonstrations, with very different stories developing from them. We had the idea of making them like films."







"We collected an enormous amount of background material; including books on design and construction. To create the feeling of horror we needed to have a solid background, so we choose a European-style house."

ing the game?
Mr Minami Yes, there are, but we haven't finally decided on them yet. We have many ideas and are working on them, but we have to consider the balance of the game as well [with regards to more powerful weaponry].

MAXIMUM Are you tempted at all to place a machine-gun in the game?
Mr Minami There may be one hidden there somewhere!

MAXIMUM It would be nice if you finished the game and had the option of restarting again but with more powerful weaponry than was capable before. What do you think?
Mr Minami This is a good idea. We'll consider it!

MAXIMUM How difficult would it be to have two people (via a link-up cable) walking around the mansion?
Mr Minami This is a very good idea, but this is our first time in making 3D characters, and we tried to make them complement the story.

MAXIMUM How different are the storylines between the two characters?
Mr Minami The story changes quite considerably.

MAXIMUM Do you encounter anything in the game that is unique to a particular character?
Mr Minami The game is basically an action one, but we wanted to put in demonstrations [character discussions], with very different stories developing from them. We had the idea of making them like films.

MAXIMUM On the new CD that you showed us (the 60% complete version of the game), when you first encounter a zombie, there is a detailed sequence of the zombie turning round. This was excellent. How many more of those sequences do you hope to see in the completed game?
Mr Minami There will be more of those - lots more with different CG. The white zombie turning round has rather eerie-looking eyes.

MAXIMUM We asked you how long the game was. Is it possible to finish it very quickly?
Mr Minami This depends on many things. The mansion is quite big, so time is wasted when you get lost in it, and while coming and going you meet enemies, which also takes up a lot of time. If you can go straight through it, I don't think it would take that much time. But we hope the player will spend time appreciating each room. It has not been completed yet so I can't say what the quickest time would be, but in normal circumstances, about three days.

MAXIMUM What elements other than the two selectable characters will you include so that you can replay the game?
Mr Minami Well, depending on the combination of characters, there is a variety of stories which have different endings which we hope those who buy the game will wish to see.

MAXIMUM From what we've seen of the game, there are two or three characters on the screen at most. Would it be possible for example to put one player against ten zombies?
Mr Minami We don't have ten at the moment. The main point is the completion of the game, and what action the PlayStation can handle.

MAXIMUM Would it be possible with the PlayStation?
Mr Minami It depends on how the game is made, but I feel it would not really be possible.



MAXIMUM It would be good to have a difficulty setting where you could have the option to attack a lot of creatures at once. From the player's point of view, it would be nice to see how far he could get before he gets slaughtered.
Mr Minami At present, these settings are not included.

MAXIMUM Capcom games, particularly the coin-ops and conversions, are famous for their 'secrets'. Will there be any real secrets (for example, a dead Street Fighter wandering around the mansion)?
Mr Minami We wanted to put them in, but it took a long time just to make up the game, but if there's scope for them, of course we want to put them in.

MAXIMUM The name has changed from Biohazard to Resident Evil. What was the reason for that? We know there is a Megadrive game called Biohazard. Is that the reason it's changing for Europe?
Mr Minami No, that has no connection. When choosing titles for games, there are certain preferences in Europe and America, and it just happened that one of the suggestions was Resident Evil, which we thought was good to use.

MAXIMUM When are you hoping to release the game?
Mr Minami We'd like to put it out as soon as possible, but it will take some time. Hopefully, it will be available in Japan by spring, so perhaps summer for Europe after the conversion.

"Well, depending on the combination of characters, there is a variety of stories which have different endings which we hope those who buy the game will wish to see."







ILLEGAL ALIENS

PLAYSTATION SOFTWARE IN JAPAN



Another two months, and another deluge of software for game-players throughout the Land of the Rising Sun to get excited about. Top of the heap is Street Fighter Zero; with Capcom finally getting their act together and releasing a first-rate port-over after the tragedy that was Street Fighter Real Battle on Film. This and other main releases (such as Toshinden 2) have received their own news story; as such titles deserve a more detailed examination, whilst the remainder of less well-known games are massed together in this regular software round-up.

Before continuing, it is worth mentioning that four other titles are also available, but have not been previewed due to a number of reasons. Three of them were adorned with so much Japanese text that they were impossible to get to grips with properly. These were Dokioki; a weird and wonderful role-playing game with beautifully rendered droids, Air Land Battle; a strategic warfare game using hex-based combat and Classic Road; a mind-numbing horse racing title. The other release was Kileak, the Blood 2; a truly outstanding Doomesque wanderer (and a vast improvement on the original) that is receiving a more in-depth overview in **MAXIMUM** issue #4.

The rest of the import titles are the usual mixed bag; ranging from the dire to the excellent, with a wealth of mediocre titles in between. First up is Perfect Golf, a sports title for up to four players with a special coaching mode featuring a popular Japanese golfing hero! Sadly, there's huge amounts of Japanese text to wade through, and when the game itself eventually starts the graphics lack any sort of detail; consisting mainly of two-dimensional scenery that pixelates horribly. Couple this with a control method that is far too simple (you may exactly time the strength of your shot, for example), and you have a golfing simulator that lacks any sort of playable and graphical punch.



Last issue, **MAXIMUM** was overwhelmed with sports titles, and this time it's the turn of shoot-em-ups to be released in large quantities. Four such games come under the spotlight this time, and top of the heap is In the Hunt by Xing Entertainment (Irem). This places you (and a friend) in a steel submarine that must fight through a series of underwater levels, with the predictable boss at the end of each one. As you can see, the graphics are extremely polished, the power-ups are numerous and difficulty level is set just right. However, the action is very sluggish throughout and the gameplay takes the 'old-school' shoot 'em up approach, with no innovative features whatsoever. A well-constructed and visually impressive game, but slow-moving and uninspiring.

THE HUNT IS ON!

Irem's In The Hunt looks a bit scruffy graphically, but once you see the game in action you can begin to see the amount of effort that has been put into the detail on the game. The volume of sprites on-screen at any given time is also impressive.

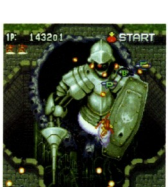


In The Hunt leads the way for PlayStation scrolling shooting games!



Next we have Gunbird by Atlus; a translation of their coin-op of the same name that features of choice of five characters, who travel through numerous levels to combat the menace of a giant cuddly bear. As you may have gathered, this is Manga-based shoot 'em up action that has an excellent cartoon introduction (and even a gallery of pictures to view), but the game itself is over far too quickly, the graphics look decidedly 16-bit, and the game must be completely twice before it comes to an end. A speedy game with little slow-down, but rather mediocre in the game-play department.

Bottom of the heap is the second-rate Two-Ten Kaku by Sony Music Entertainment (Japan). After a moderate CG intro and a choice of three robot fighters, you must take to the vertically-scrolling skies and dispense justice to wave upon wave of similar-shaped craft. Not so much uninspiring; more like boring as hell. Even the large bosses move with the grace and fluidity of a Megadrive







IS HORNED OWL ANY GOOD?

Despite a team up between Sony Music and Konami (the latter producing the light gun), Horned Owl is a disappointment. A mixture of sprites and 3D, the game is occasionally impressive graphically, but the gun-based action is very dull indeed compared to the latest arcade shooters.

title, and the needless amounts of CG cut-scenes only added to the disappointment of the game itself. Avoid at all costs.

The final shoot 'em up to grace the **MAXIMUM** collection thankfully takes a different stance. Horned Owl appears to be Sony 's stab at a Virtua Cop-style game, but with futuristic overtones. The game arrived with a dark blue phazer for a more realistic sensation, and for a true professional touch, Sony recruited the animation talents of Masamune Shirow (famous for such Manga epics as Appleseed and Ghost in the Machine) for the cartoon cut-scenes. Unfortunately, Shirow's magic didn't rub off on the actual game action. The route is precalculated, and all you have to do is point and shoot, but where this differs from Virtua Cop is that the enemies are very two-dimensional robots with jerky movements that look out of place against the smooth-scrolling backgrounds. Pixelation is a problem, but the main factor against this title is that you're firing at badly animated robots, and not smoothly moving polygon-suited gentlemen. The final problem with Horned Owl is the difficulty setting. This is an easy game to complete, as the gun (although less weighty than Sega's effort) is easy to operate, but unlike Virtua Cop, there's really little to inspire you to complete it again. Sony could have spent so much more time over this to produce a rival to Virtua Cop, but have instead created a real duffer.



Does Horned Owl compare favourably with Virtua Cop? Er, no.



REVERTHION IS ROLLOCKS!

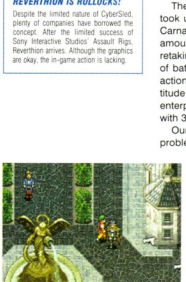
Despite the limited nature of CyberSled, plenty of companies have borrowed the concept. After the limited success of Sony Interactive Studios' Assault Rigs, Reverthion arrives. Although the graphics are okay, the in-game action is lacking.

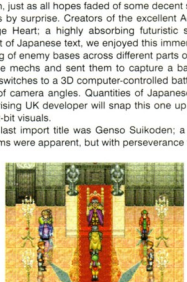
Moving onto other software genres, Atlus decided to spring another title on us; a 2D beat 'em up known as Gouketuji-Ichizoku 2. Starring a cast of fourteen contestants, this has all the appeal of a third-party Neo Geo fighting game, and plays appallingly. The action is slow, character animations are sometimes loaded in during the fights themselves, and the characters lack any sort of charisma. We have humourous old ladies, nubile young girls and even a Dhalsim look-alike, but the all-important gameplay is lacking. This is least entertaining PlayStation beat 'em up that MAXIMUM has seen since Twin Goddesses.

The world of mediocre software gains another initiate; this time the dubious award goes to Reverthion by Tecno Soft. Best described as Cybersled with monsters, this initially impressed us with excellent texture-mapped beasties roaming around attractive arenas. Of course, it was when the game started that the problems arose. Apart from being unbelievably straightforward (to such an extent that we completed it without continuing on our first attempt), we found the fighting area too small, and the monsters lacked a variety of attacks. Despite the fancy visuals and the nice idea, this was yet another failed attempt, but certainly had more to offer than Cybersled.

Then, just as all hopes faded of some decent software, along came two highly different titles that took us by surprise. Creators of the excellent Aquanaut's Holiday, Artdink, have followed up with Carnage Heart; a highly absorbing futuristic strategy that oozes playability. Despite the large amount of Japanese text, we enjoyed this immensely. The main gaming objectives seem to be the retaking of enemy bases across different parts of the earth. With this in mind, we rearmed a squad of battle mechs and sent them to capture a base held by enemy tanks. Once within range, the action switches to a 3D computer-controlled battle arena and the action is watched through a multitude of camera angles. Quantities of Japanese text made this difficult to play, but hopefully an enterprising UK developer will snap this one up, as it looks to be an involving strategy simulation with 32-bit visuals.

Our last import title was Genso Suikoden; a Role Playing game by Konami. The obvious text problems were apparent, but with perseverance we managed an hour or two of blissful wanderings over beautifully detailed landscapes, fighting a multitude of entities in a Final Fantasy manner. The added excitement of ever thirty different monster types, and eighty types of items makes this all the more in-depth, but the main excitement gained from this is possibility of a final confrontation involving up to 108 different characters! This looks from our initial play to be all that Arc the Lad should have been, and we look forward to an official UK release as soon as possible, especially as the PlayStation has no official RPGs at all.











OH DEAR! OH DEAR!

A montage of some of the more dire releases seen on the PlayStation this month. Witness the sadness of one of the most dire beat 'em ups yet seen! Directly above is a picture of Carnage Heart, an impressive-looking 3D strategy game.

HOT OFF THE BOAT

BRAND NEW SEGA SATURN SOFTWARE

During the months of November and December, the import market for Saturn software reached a fever-pitch. Not only was it the traditional Christmas buying season, but it was also heralded by the arrival of the Saturn's greatest software to date. However, if you don't like X-Men, Rally, Cop or VF2 you're in for a bit of a disappointment, because the rest of the releases are pretty rubbish.



Sega's "Big Three" games had the anticipated effect on the import market - a radical swing in the gaming habits of the hardcore players showed that Sega were recapturing ground in the battle against Sony. Importers have told **MAXIMUM** that all of the interest is now in Sega's machine, with only Doom and Ridge Racer Revolution providing any sort of competition for the likes of Virtua Cop and Sega Rally. As well as Sega's games, Capcom also accounted for a great deal of trade with the unforgettable X-Men: Children of the Atom (see page 64 for part two of our Extended Play coverage).

When X-Men was released on November 22, stocks were initially limited to the wholesalers that supply some of our trusty importers, resulting in a severe dearth of CDs in London's West End shops (which **MAXIMUM** regularly visits when compiling our import reports). This resulted in some shops having no X-Men at all, whilst some of those who did charged exorbitant prices. Did we hear £120 being demanded for a copy of X-Men in one particular establishment? Unfortunately, we did, taking us back to the days when importers used to charge up to a ton for a piece of hot software (a lot of you probably wouldn't have heard of the tale where one particular shop auctioned off their last copy of the then-super hot Super NES version of Street Fighter II... for £135!). Thankfully, stocks of the Sega "Big Three" games were easily forthcoming resulting in slightly more realistic prices. The moral of this story? Shop around and be prepared to wait just a few days and save huge amounts of pounds. After just one frenzied weekend of X-sales, we were able to locate a copy for a relatively affordable sixty quid...

With their arcade reputation sinking faster than Robert Maxwell, Taito have decided to unleash some of their aged arcade "hits" on the Saturn, with two new releases arriving in the **MAXIMUM** offices during mid-December. So, which classic titles have been deemed smart enough to be converted onto Saturn? A Bubble Bobble/Rainbow Islands double pack, perhaps? Er, no. Try Darius and the ludicrous Hatrick Heroes.

The latter must rank as one of the most feeble football simulations ever to appear since ZX Spectrum World Cup Carnival, and was literally met with howls of derision from the assembled EMAP hacks. With Victory Goal suddenly looking for all the world like the height of gaming sophistication, Hatrick Heroes was quickly dispatched to the furthest reaches of the games cupboard.

Darius though, was an almost completely different story. The arrival of Pulstar on Neo Geo was enough to rekindle our interest in sideways scrolling blasters and Darius delighted us with a range of utterly excellent bosses. True, the actual mid-level action wasn't that far removed from the original out-dated coin-op, but it must be said that Darius did offer some small amount of amusement. If you can pick it up cheap, it's worth a look.

Ready yourself for the worst Saturn soccer simulation seen yet!



OH DEAR! OH DEAR!

MAXIMUM has received quite a number of calls from disappointed Saturn owners who've just bought FIFA Soccer. Well, believe us when we say that EA's game is ten times better than the soccer travesty you see on these pages. Hatrick Heroes is utterly appalling and should only be loaded up for potential comedy.





DARIUS GETS OFFICIAL RELEASE

We can reveal that Darius is to get an official release soon. The import version is available now and we have to admit that whilst the game isn't a disaster, it lacks the polish and technical finesse you expect from a Saturn product. And the sound's awful. However, its playability is something of a saving grace.






PUZZLING ACTION

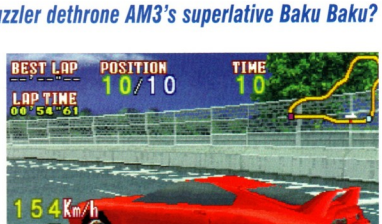
When the latest consignment of Sega Saturn import discs arrived for our perusal, none of them really caught our imagination. However, Data East's new puzzle game (pictured left) has a great deal going for it and is just as good as Saturn Puyo Puyo. However, AM3's Baku Baku is still a lot better.

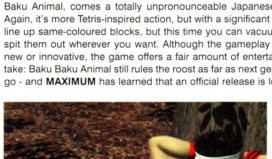
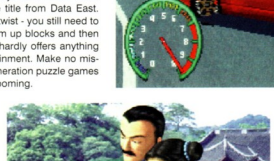
Can Data East's new puzzler dethrone AM3's superlative Baku Baku?

The resurgence of popularity in the racing genre (no doubt inspired by the appearance of a certain AM3 conversion) probably accounted for the arrival of two new Saturn road racers. The bizarrely monikered King The Spirits and JVC's Dead Heat vie for attention in a Japanese market that's holding its breath for the December 29 release of Sega Rally. Both titles are utter tripe.

JVC's number, Dead Heat, is trying so hard to be Ridge Racer, it hurts. And pain (lots of it) is what you should expect for handing over good money for this abomination. The graphics are bare and repetitive and the car's handling is like a bizarre cross between Ridge Racer and Daytona USA. Also included are a bunch of supposedly good-looking Japanese women to drive around, depicted with the wonders of full-motion video. When gratuitous lingering shots on various parts of female anatomy are the highpoints of a video game, you know you're in trouble.

The current rage for Sega Saturn puzzle titles continues unabated in the Land of the Rising Sun. After the twin wonders that are Puyo Puyo and AM3's Baku Baku Animal, comes a totally unpronounceable Japanese title from Data East. Again, it's more Tetris-inspired action, but with a significant twist - you still need to line up same-coloured blocks, but this time you can vacuum up blocks and then spit them out wherever you want. Although the gameplay hardly offers anything new or innovative, the game offers a fair amount of entertainment. Make no mistake: Baku Baku Animal still rules the roost as far as next generation puzzle games go - and **MAXIMUM** has learned that an official release is looming.



YET MORE CG

A smattering of images from the latest CG graphics discs released in Japan can be found dotted around this page. The quality of the discs varies drastically. Whereas the Jacky and Sarah discs were both of a high quality, the likes of Lau (left) and Akira (far left) are noticeably less impressive. Worst of the bunch is Wolf (below). However, for the VF pervs among you, the Pai disc is worth investigation. Pai fans can thrill to the sight of their heroine doing her make-up, bathing and showering.

The latest VIRTUA FIGHTER graphics discs!



The unquenchable thirst for all things Virtua Fighter continues in Japan, where four more CG Saturn discs are now available for sale to complement the Sarah and Jacky discs revealed in **MAXIMUM** issue #2.

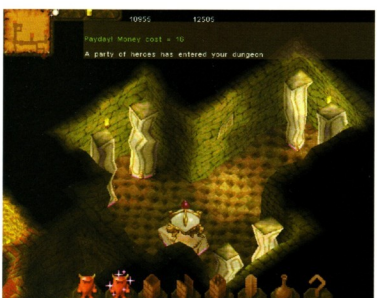
Each disc features one song from the Yu Suzuki-commissioned audio CD "Dancing Shadow", along with myriad CG images of your favourite polygon fighter. Akira, Pai, Lau and Wolf discs are now available in Japan, each providing a small amount of pleasure as you appreciate the various hi-res CG images (which are all excellent, bar Lau's which are a tad dodgy).

Curiously enough, the **MAXIMUM** offices have received a number of calls about these CG discs and where to get them. Unfortunately, it appears that no importers stock them at all (obviously there isn't much of a market for dodgy Japanese pop and accompanying still-screen images). However, once we have the complete set of these VF masterpieces, expect to see a **MAXIMUM** competition where we'll give away the lot. We might even chuck in the limited edition Gold Collection that started off this entire CG madness...



BULLFROG FOR '96

TADPOLE, TOAD.... OR PRINCE?



Bullfrog are not to be considered as pond life by any means, as their awesome line-up of future releases proves. After the runaway success of Magic Carpet and Theme Park on the PC, their development teams have really put the old grey matter to work and come up with some original concepts and slick conversions. MAXIMUM was treated to a sneak preview of the work in progress that left us hungry for more...

Since the mid-eighties, the genre of fantasy role playing games has suffered a dearth of inspired conceptual ideas, leaving its many devoted followers feeling somehow unfulfilled. In fact this has been the case for many styles of game, and programmers have had to rely on impressive graphics and high speed action to keep their products looking fresh and original.

Talk to the programming teams at Bullfrog, and you'll discover they are quite passionate about the lack of innovations in computer games in recent years - especially in the field of RPGs. They believe they may have found the answer to this problem with Dungeon Keeper... a game that turns the tired old genre of the fantasy role playing games on its head.

So... how is it different? Well in lots of ways actually. For starters, this is not just a first person perspective RPG. It combines the best elements of gameplay from several genres: isometric 3D strategy, first person RPG and top down shoot-em-up. Sort of a cross between Command & Conquer, Doom, Loaded and Theme Park. But the thing that appeals to us more than anything is that instead of playing the whiter than white boy scout adventurer... you finally get to be the bad guy!

Dungeon Keeper promises to revolutionise the fantasy genre!

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Dungeon Keeper features the debut of Bullfrog's all-new 3D engine, which allows players to view the action from just about any perspective. Over-head, first person, isometric - it's all here. This did entail some speed loss when we first saw it several months ago, but now it's running at a fairly high speed.

Dungeon Keeper looks like being just as innovative as previous Bullfrog epics such as Magic Carpet and Populous were in their day. As you control the entire dungeon, you can choose to be either an omniscient "god" controlling the action or you can choose to possess one of your charges and get into the action.



An ever-changing perspective on RPGs!

Players take on the role of the Dungeon Master and are charged with building, running and staffing their domain. Soon enough, shiny white knights will invade the sanctity of the castle, and players can either set their evil minions to attack, or possess the body of one of the creatures to take part in the scuffle themselves.

There is a lot of strategy involved - pay the goblins too little and they rebel and need torturing to get back on side, or let an adventurer escape and he broadcasts the secrets of the dungeons to all and sundry (who will naturally want a piece of the action).

An incredible amount of detail has gone into the graphics, with true light sourcing and some pretty spooky nooks and crannies to explore. Topped off with some cool sound effects and an awesome intro sequence, this really looks like it's going to be something to write home about.



GRAPHICS 'R' US

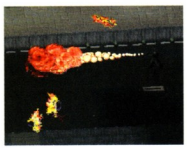
In the field of PC gaming, the competition to produce the hottest 3D graphics has always been most intense - and these days, it's even more fierce with excellent competition from Scavenger and id. Bullfrog's visuals more than cut the mustard.

SYNDICATE WARS

Another eagerly awaited Bullfrog release is Syndicate Wars - the follow on from Syndicate on the PC. For those of you who are not familiar with the original Syndicate (where have you been?) it is a highly acclaimed strategy action game that provided plenty of violence from an isometric viewpoint.

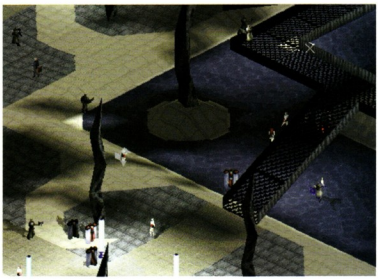
Syndicate closed with the global domination of the world by The Corporation. Now, a hundred years later, the chip that controlled the minds of the world's population has started to malfunction, and an uprising against the grim suppression they have been suffering is in the making.

In Syndicate Wars, players take on one of three roles - an agent for The Corporation, an elder in a powerful religious cult or the leather clad leader of a bikers gang. The chosen group will be set appropriate missions to strengthen their position in the fight for overall domination. Supplied with up to 24 weapons, including lasers and nuclear hand grenades, the scene is set for some fairly serious destruction.





The highly-acclaimed Syndicate Wars break out on PlayStation!



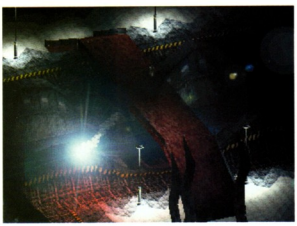


Destroy everything in sight with a variety of highly powerful weaponry!

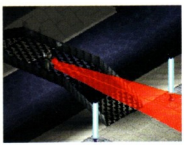
The main criticism of the first Syndicate was that the characters were a bit small, and because the viewpoint was held at a fixed angle, it was possible to walk behind bits of scenery and lose sight of yourself. In developing Syndicate Wars, Bullfrog have taken on board these criticisms, and provided enhanced graphics with full light sourcing which looks awesome. All the 30 cities are rotatable by 360 degrees, and once enough weaponry has been collected it is possible to destroy everything the eye can see (although perhaps not terribly productive.) Some cool effects have been added to create more atmosphere, and while we were with the programming team they proudly announced that they had just perfected a particularly impressive random raining effect.

The missions will also be a little more complicated, and may involve travelling to two or three locations before they are completed, whilst failure to achieve part of a mission may result in the brief changing - for instance if the scientist you have been sent to kidnap escapes, you may be ordered to hunt him down and kill him. The gameplay is being further enhanced by the players ability to control the lead member of the group directly, and get involved in some good old fashioned fisticuffs.

Unfortunately, Syndicate Wars is not being released until March 1996, but will be available then on both the PC CD and the PlayStation. It looks like it will be a worthy successor to its classic parent, and we are eagerly awaiting the chance to get our hands on this for review. We'll bring you a full report at the first opportunity.



360 DEGREE ACTION!
Another excellent new feature is the fact that the action can be viewed from any angle. In the first game, it was strictly limited to an isometric view, but improvements in technology and programming are clearly evident.







SPECIAL FX
As well as an excellent new look to the Syndicate game, the programmers have also incorporated plenty more visual effects, including rain!






INDIVIDUAL DATA
The minions in Bullfrog's strategy titles have grown in character and intelligence in every successive game. Whereas the characters in Populous (their first commerical game) were single-sex and stupid, in Theme Hospital characters have radically different appearances.

THEME HOSPITAL

We have to confess, when it was put to us that life at a hospital was going to get the Theme Park treatment, we were dubious to say the least. It's not that we don't believe building and running a medical establishment is challenging, it probably is, but we failed to see how any enjoyment could be had from dealing with life-threatening diseases and emptying bedpans.

Bullfrog offered to put **MAXIMUM** to rights on this issue, and introduced us to the programming team for Theme Hospital, who have some pretty wacky ideas of hospital life.

Players start off with a choice of four time periods, the Middle Ages, Victorian era, 1970-80s and the future. They can then choose the location of their hospital and start to build it. As with Theme Park, the player is in full control of the layout, staffing and policies of their hospital - and provisions must be made for research, training and specialist testing equipment, as well as providing enough toilets to accommodate the patients. Extensive research was important for a factually correct program, and the boys at Bullfrog spent many hours at Frimley Park and Great Ormand Street Hospitals to get the full picture (they even took a camcorder into a neck operation - although thankfully this has not been digitised into the game..).




Once prepared, sim citizens start to arrive in the surgery, and need to be diagnosed and treated. Rather than depress us with chemotherapy and kidney transplants, some semi-humourous fictional diseases - such as bloaty head, severe hair growth and fashion victim - have been substituted for the real McCoy.

One of the first things we noticed was the huge improvement in the quality of the graphics.There are over 1,000 characters which are larger and more detailed than the somewhat symbolistic bods in Theme Park. Also, aware of the criticism about the lack of different races and sexes in Theme Park, Bullfrog have become politically correct, with a selection of cartoon-like punters that cater for a very wide range of minority groups.

The game will be released on PC CD in April 1996, with 32-bit conversions planned in the following months, so if you've ever sat for hours in the casualty department of your local hospital thinking "what on Earth are they doing back there?"... here's your chance to find out.





Saturn Magic Carpet! This time it's even faster!

After the storming success of the Magic Carpet series on the PC, Bullfrog are currently putting the finishing touches to the Saturn and PlayStation conversions.

When we were with Bullfrog, we were privileged to see the first ever working version of the Saturn conversion which is due for release in March next year.

These are some of the first available screen shots, showing the work in progress, but what they don't show is the enhanced speed which this version will run at (20 frames per second, as opposed to the 12-16 frames per second on the average PC).

BULLFROG SHORT STORIES

Programmers handling the conversion of Theme Park to the 32-bit consoles for the Japanese market have encountered a somewhat unusual problem. One of the cut-scenes in the original game shows a pair of businessmen negotiating over pay in a darkened room. The problem is that when they shake hands they are shown to have only three fingers... Apparently in Japan, those found to have dealings of a criminal nature are punished by their own with the removal of one finger, therefore making the shame of their wrongdoings public. The game has had to be reprogrammed to give the characters an extra finger.

Strict censoring laws in Germany prohibit the use of excessive violence in computer games (so Mortal Kombat's not too widespread then), which has been a constant source of frustration to programmers around the world. Bullfrog's Syndicate Wars team are currently suffering from this syndrome because they can think of no humane conversion for the razor wire (pulled taut across an alleyway, it decapitates all who pass by). Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated...

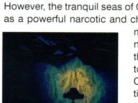


UNDERSEA ACTIVITY
Creation once again shows the level of innovation that Bullfrog put into the majority of their products. It must be said that the only game that has any kind of resemblance to Creation is Artdink's Japanese PlayStation release Aquanaut's Holiday.

CREATION

From floating across the hillside on a mystical carpet, we now plunge you into the depths of the deepest lagoon in what looks like it will be another graphically stunning future release from Bullfrog.

Decades of destruction have turned the Earth into an uninhabitable wasteland, with radiation and pollution killing most land-based creatures (sounds a lot like Covent Garden actually). Only the seas offered some sanctuary, and so the surviving aquatic species are transported to a man-made planet covered with water. However, the tranquil seas of Creation are also host to a deadly fungus, which acts as a powerful narcotic and changes any living thing who eats it into a psychotic maniac, intent on nothing more than getting their next fix. The player's task is to seek out and destroy the sentient fungus, and restore peace and harmony to the planet's surface.



Creation is due out in the Spring of 1996, and will initially be available on PC CD. **MAXIMUM** will bring you a full review in the near future.

OVER 20 PAGES OF INCISIVE CRITICISM ON THE TOP RELEASES OF THE MONTH FOR ALL "NEXT GENERATION" FORMATS!

THE ESSENTIAL BUYERS GUIDE

REVIEWS

Welcome to the third instalment of the MAXIMUM Buyers Guide, the reviews section that actually tells you whether software is worth buying, as opposed to labelling games with some nondescript percentage score. If a game's rubbish, we'll tell you it's rubbish. It's that simple really.

This month's selection of software is actually pretty good, with very few titles receiving the dreaded two stars or less. In terms of quality software, it's the Saturn that fares best, with the phenomenal Virtua Cop, Sega Rally and Virtua Fighter 2 all being utterly brilliant. Another feather in Sega's cap is the fact that they haven't taken the mick with the PAL conversions. There are no obtrusive borders or speed loss on the top flight Sega produce - something that Sony can definitely learn from when it comes to their US and Japanese-sourced software making its way to European shores.

As is always the case, you'll find truly informative features on the top software at the front of the mag in our Extended Play section. No title featured there will ever receive less than four stars. Every Extended Play is a guaranteed quality purchase.

MAXIMUM RATINGS SYSTEM

★★★★★	*A truly outstanding release and an essential purchase for any one.*
★★★★☆	*A recommended title that's head and shoulders above the competition.*
★★★☆☆	*Reserved for solid, fairly entertaining games that are missing a certain something.*
★★☆☆☆	*A below-par videogame that could only possibly appeal to the near-mythic "fan of the genre" - if such a thing exists.*
★☆☆☆☆	*Hideous, retarded software that should not blight your prized game collection under any circumstances.*

MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED

VIRTUA COP — Sega Saturn

A top gun game which others may try to copy (witness Horned Owl) but no-one can surpass in terms of testing gameplay. A deserved Christmas smash, Cop manages to stun on myriad levels.



SEGA RALLY — Sega Saturn

This month's cover game is yet another big player from the Sega stable of coin-ops. With its untouchable graphics and super-realistic gameplay, Rally is another essential buy. Read the Extended Play starting on page 6.



DOOM — Sony PlayStation

Yes, we reviewed it in the last issue of the magazine, but Doom gains a whole new lease of life when played in the link-up Deathmatch mode. So if you haven't bought it yet, you're mad.



ACTUA SOCCER — Sony PlayStation

It certainly seems as though you lot are into soccer simulations for the PlayStation, judging by the amount of units FIFA and the like have sold. Well, FIFA has been supplanted by this new Gremlin epic.



SAMURAI SHODOWN 3 — Neo Geo

Once again, the only Neo Geo game of the month turns out to be something of a recommended title. Yes, it's another beat 'em up and it's not really in the same league as King of Fighters, but it's different enough to warrant investigation.



SOFTWARE LINE-UP

Sega Saturn

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2	★★★★★
VIRTUA COP	★★★★★
SEGA RALLY	★★★★★
MYSTARIA	★★★★☆
GALACTIC ATTACK	★★★★☆
WORMS	★★★★☆
VIRTUA RACING	★★★★☆
FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2	★★★★☆

Sony Playstation

MORTAL KOMBAT 3	★★★★☆
ASSAULT RIGS	★★★★☆
FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2	★★★★☆
TWISTED METAL	★★★★☆
PGA TOUR '96	★★☆☆☆
GOAL STORM	★★☆☆☆
ACTUA SOCCER	★★★★☆
AGILE WARRIOR	★★★★☆
LONE SOLDIER	★★☆☆☆
HI-OCTANE	★★☆☆☆
DEFCON 5	★★☆☆☆
ALONE IN THE DARK: JACK'S BACK	★★★★☆

Neo Geo CD

SAMURAI SHODOWN 3	★★★★☆

3DO

RETURN FIRE: MAPS O' DEATH	★★★★☆
PO'ed	★★★★☆
FOES OF ALI	★★★☆☆
ALONE IN THE DARK 2	★★☆☆☆

PC/CD-ROM

THE DIG	★★★★☆
REBEL ASSAULT 2	★★☆☆☆
WORMS	★★★★☆
TILT	★★★★☆
TEKWAR	★★★☆☆
SU-27 FLANKER	★★★★☆
STEEL PANTHERS	★★★☆☆
MONOPOLY	★★★☆☆
MANIC KARTS	★★★☆☆
11TH HOUR	★★★☆☆

MAXIMUM GAME OF THE MONTH

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

An utterly incredible fighting game with a stunning range of 3D graphics and over 2,000 superlative moves... And the PAL conversion is unbelievably good. Buy in confidence whichever Saturn you own - VF2 is amazing.



SEGA SATURN

The Big Three have finally arrived. You know what we're talking about - Virtua Cop, Sega Rally Championship and Virtua Fighter 2. Three huge arcade games that promise to redefine what next generation gaming is all about, says Sega. And **MAXIMUM** has to agree as all three titles take their respective genres to the very heights of entertainment. Curiously, even Virtua Cop, which promised to offer zero lastability has surprised the hell out of us by officially being the most played game this month (even beating VF2!), mostly down to the huge amusement factor offered by one player using two Virtua Guns. The tables seem to be turning now - whereas Sony stole the lead from Sega with their hype-driven PlayStation launch, the true quality software seems to be drying up now - just as Sega release their three biggest Saturn products.

However, what this month's reviews section also shows is that as we've mentioned before, third party support (without which, PlayStation would be dead) is virtually non-existent on the Saturn. Although there are some exceptions, such as X-Men and ThunderHawk 2, generally, if it isn't by a Sega AM team, it tends to be average and not worth buying. While PlayStation has that advantage over Sega, the Saturn's future will always be the basis for some pretty heated controversy. Let us know what you think...

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 - Is this the greatest video game of all-time?



MAXIMUM SATURN

An updated top five peripherals list, which shows exactly why these particular Saturn appendages are pretty much a load of rubbish (apart from the Virtua Gun of course).

1. VIRTUA GUN
You need to play Virtua Cop with TWO guns - one in each hand - to fully appreciate this stunning game.

2. MPEG VIDEO-CD CARD
Why settle for "VHS quality"? Save up £300 for a dual standard PAL/NTSC LaserDisc player if you're really into watching movies as they were meant to be seen.

3. VIRTUA STICK
Sega of America have been pushing this heavily with VF2. Our advice? Stick with the pad. Without an unmovable base, these sticks aren't that great.

4. SIX-PLAYER ADAPTOR
Apparently, there are some games coming out for this now, such as NBA Jam and NHL Hockey. Right...

5. LINK-UP CABLE
Exclusive! It does exist! It will be released! But commitment from Sega remains dodgy.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MAXIMUM

In Japan, it is officially the biggest game ever, eclipsing even the Street Fighter phenomenon at its height. Although not quite as popular over here or in the States, Virtua Fighter 2 is acknowledged as one of the best fighting games there is; visually stunning and extremely playable, with a huge array of techniques.

It would perhaps be the understatement of the year to say that a lot rides on the quality of the Saturn conversion - not least the future of the Sega superconsole. It's fortunate then that master programmers AM2 have confounded the sceptics and handed in a game that is remarkably similar to its coin-op parent - a game that's running on hardware that's 20 times more expensive than the Sega Saturn.

The first thing to strike you about VF2 is undoubtedly the resolution. The sheer definition of the game is stunning - far in advance of anything seen on Saturn and PlayStation and very, very close indeed to its arcade parent. You wouldn't have seen anything like it on Saturn before and it's a fact that most of the magazine reviews you will see of this game will have substandard low-resolution frame grabs of VF2 (**MAXIMUM** VF2 pics are full high resolution but even this isn't as good as actually seeing the game on-screen). Trust us: seeing is truly believing with Virtua Fighter 2.

Again, staying with visuals is the sheer fluidity of the action. Virtua Fighter 2 runs at the same speed as the arcade machine (60 fps) and has a smoothness to it that's unlike anything seen before. Namco's PlayStation Tekken is the only thing remotely close to it.





But while the game's graphics are the main attraction of Virtua Fighter 2, its staying power rests entirely on the gameplay. It would be fair to say that each of the characters is fairly unique. Whereas there were a lot of shared techniques in VF1, the new game introduces new styles and far more moves for each fighter. The range of available moves is frankly breathtaking - the Japanese have just released a book called Virtua Fighter 2 Maniacs which









spends over 500 pages going into depth on every facet of the game's techniques. Finding all of VF1's 700-odd moves was tough going - VF2 has over 2,000, which remains the greatest number in any arcade fighting game available in the UK (pseudo-sequel Fighting Vipers remains something of an unknown at the time of writing).

As well as the vast array of throws, punches and kicks, VF2 boosts the amount of reversals significantly. Previously, this was only the province of Pai, but now Kage, Akira and Wolf have them as well. Mastering them is pretty tough, but spectacular to watch. A **MAXIMUM** favourite has to be Akira, who effortlessly shrugs an incoming kick aside and responds instantly with an elbow to the chest, which sends the opponent flying across the ring. These moves are the icing on the cake, and it's surprising to us that they haven't been copied by Sega's competitors.

In terms of options, again AM2 have excelled themselves. All of the options of VF1 have returned, but plenty of extras have been included, such as a bewildering array of multi-player options. There's no tournament mode, but better still is the King of Fighters-style Team Battle, which allows players to choose a team of five characters to control in an elimination scenario. It's touches such as this, along with comprehensive selectables (including how long you want your replays!) which more than make up for any of the compromises that are evident in the conversion.

Most notable in the list of compromises has to the absence of the bridges on Shun's stage (it's funny how most people only remember one), and the slightly ropey sound quality (there's so much more speech and sound effects that something had to give). Also, we're led to believe from VF2 director Keiji Okayasu that some of the reversal attacks have either been changed or removed. Let's just say that we haven't noticed anything amiss yet. As explained in previous **MAXIMUM**s, the backdrops are no longer polygonised. They're 2D backdrops a la Tekken, only with more parallax layers, including one that scales to accentuate depth - a peculiar hardware trick only Saturn can do. There was some initial concern about this compromise, but in the finished version, it appears to work well. The coin-op's light sourcing is also missing, although some subtle changes in the colours between stages almost make up for it.



Super-realistic visuals show the true 3D power of Sega Saturn!

Additions such as Virtua Fighter 2.1 data are to be commended as well - as well as the controllable Dural boss, this tightens up many areas of the gameplay that experts exploited. It's also a nice addition in that the 2.1 upgrade was a Japan-only release, so finally us Westerners can find out what all of the fuss was about.

Virtua Fighter 2 isn't without its flaws however. The CPU player, like its arcade counterpart, is extremely susceptible to throws, and unless you've played countless games against people with many different styles, the Expert Mode (which learns techniques and uses them against you) is actually easier than the Arcade mode! This might sound like nit-picking and the fact is, it probably is, because Virtua Fighter 2 is as near to the perfect Saturn game as we're ever likely to see this side of the sun.

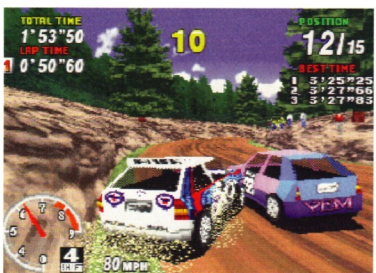


The bottom line is this: PlayStation used to have the edge in 3D games, but nobody can be sure if Sony's machine is better now because Virtua Fighter 2 is such an astounding conversion, far superior to anything seen before on the machine. AM2's Research wing (who developed the SGL graphics engine) have recently announced that this conversion of VF2 uses only 66% of the Saturn's power and that future games will be even better technically (we'll believe it when we see it).

Until we see those games, though, Virtua Fighter 2 will do quite nicely. An incredible achievement that will undoubtedly sell thousands of Saturns - not just on hype and flashy graphics, but on solid quality.

★★★★★

SEGA RALLY - AM3's monster title finally hits home!







MAXIMUM SATURN

The top five characters from Virtua Fighter 2, as decided on after months of in-depth er, *research* by the **MAXIMUM** team.

1. AKIRA YUKI
Completely transformed since VF1, Akira is incredibly powerful and has the coolest moves by far.

2. KAGE-MARU
His antics tend to irritate and frustrate, but you just can't argue with results, can you?

3. LAU CHAN
His combo potential took him to the top of VF1 and he's even more versatile in Virtua Fighter 2.

4. SARAH BRYANT
Now even faster, even bolder and even more psycho-pathic, Sarah remains a deadly opponent.

5. LION RAFALE
like Kage, he mixes good techniques with an almost unique irritation factor. And like Kage, you can't argue with his results.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MAXIMUM

There was never any doubt that this was going to be big. In fact there was very little doubt that it was ever going to be anything apart from absolutely amazing. After the clipping hi-jinx found in Daytona, it was imperative that Sega came up with an astounding title for their next racer, and thankfully, the finished Sega Rally is every bit as good as anyone could have ever hoped. Taking all of its front-end from the original arcade game, there's the immediate choice of three tracks to play on, in either championship or practice mode and every one of these tracks (including the extra Lakeside track) is a real technical accomplishment for programmers AM3, and even though the frame update rate has been reduced to a mere 30 frames per second the action is still really smooth and considerably faster than racing titles on other formats. And, unlike Time Warner's 'version' of Virtua Racing which is also on offer this month, the in-game graphics are replicated from the arcade version and apart from a few minor details, remain virtually identical to its arcade counterpart. There's no rear view mirror on offer, but this doesn't really spoil the gameplay in any way whatsoever - in fact, it boosts the challenge of the tricky Lakeside course.

One of the main reasons Daytona was criticised when it was released on the Saturn was the lack of a two-player option. Fortunately, Sega Rally, takes this in its stride in the form of a split-screen mode. This does suffer from a considerable lack of detail in comparison to the standard arcade mode - there's no audiences on any of the tracks and the game does suffer from slight visible clipping, but it still plays really well - even though we'd have preferred a link up mode. Still, the all-important speed remains.

Still despite, the slightly disappointing two-player mode, Sega Rally is still an absolutely outstanding title that really proves the technical worth of the Saturn. With the wealth of options on offer (including the time attack mode and the opportunity to fiddle with all the car settings), plus the inclusion of plenty of secret modes (see our Extended Play feature this issue) Saturn owners should rejoice in the fact that they have, without a doubt, the opportunity to play the best racing game ever created. An essential buy.

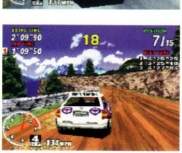
★★★★★



Experience the ultimate in Sega Saturn road racing excitement!











VIRTUA COP - Can SEGA successfully bring their arcade smash into the home?



The answer to that, of course, is a resounding yes. Virtua Cop smacks of quality throughout its three levels and at times you'll be hard pushed to tell the difference between this Saturn version and the original arcade game.

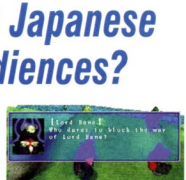
The basic premise of the title hardly needs explaining - this is probably one of the oldest game concepts ever - aim being to shoot every bad guy that dares to show their face on the screen. But while it may employ one of the oldest gaming tricks in the book, the result is absolutely outstanding putting previous plough 'em down titles such as Lethal Enforcers to complete shame.

Naturally, there's more than a couple of reasons for this. For a start, development gurus AM2 just don't do anything that's not of the highest quality possible, and while they may have palmed off one of their arcade hits (Virtua Racing) on to lesser programmers, they've certainly ensured that this both looks and plays not only as well as the original, but with the inclusion of a Virtua Gun in the game package, they've made it loads more fun than if you were just playing it with a joypad (which, incidentally, isn't too bad once you get used to the semi-cumbersome handling).

The other reason for its near-perfectness is down to the fact that it doesn't require anything near the power required to bring something such as Virtua Fighter 2 to a home system, as although the graphics are generated in real time, the game is nowhere near as complicated. Which is all part of the attraction - it may be mindless shooting, but at the end of the day this is loads more fun than, say, a complicated RPG and even though it is relatively easy to complete (after all it has been out in the arcade for over a year) it's something that you'll come back to time and time again. especially as, once completed, there's AM2's now-famous ranking mode to conquer, plus a mirror mode and loads of other little extras (see our Extended Play feature this issue) included too.

So after a somewhat shaky start, the Saturn really seems to be showing us its true power - Virtua Cop doesn't use the full power of the Saturn and its nigh-on arcade perfect - and with games like this on offer it's hard to see why anyone would be disappointed with the console. Along with VF2 and Rally, this is an absolutely essential Saturn purchase, and while it may not be the most technically astute or complicated title, it's easily the most instantly gratifying. A top-notch conversion that will be played and played and played - although for utmost enjoyment it's probably best to shell out £25 for the extra gun, either for a top two-player game or for real Reservoir Dogs style action.

★★★★★





MYSTARIA - Will this Japanese RPG woo UK audiences?

Although Sega have had a few RPG hits in their time, it's never something that's been hugely important in the way that they were almost essential to the success of the Super Nintendo. And, it seems they were even less important to Sega Europe, who in the past decided not to release most of the glut of Japanese titles on offer.

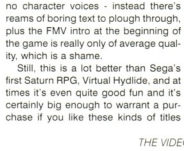
Probably the most successful RPG Sega Europe ever released was the Shining Force series, and it's from here that Mystaria takes most of its inspiration. The plot is completely uninspired (but to be fair, they're always the same anyway) - after a long period of peace and harmony, an evil tyrant has decided to take over Queensland (from whence our Art Editor, Gary Harrod hails) and has turned many of the people into worthless slaves. He's also kidnapped the queen, and it's down to a young prince and his band of merry warriors to sort out the mess.

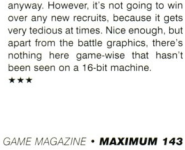
As is standard in RPGs today, most of the action revolves around having huge bundles in castles, dungeons, creepy forests and the likes, although it seems that in Mystaria you fight more often than is healthy and after battling through one confrontation you barely have time to breathe before you're flung into the next. This leaves little time to develop the story, and although you'll get to recruit new characters along the way, there's never time to get into any RPG 'banter' which is what often lifts the atmosphere of these sometimes dull outings.

However, probably he most disappointing aspect of Mystaria is that it doesn't really use the Saturn's capabilities. Although the battles are played out in 3D which is a nice touch, there's no character voices - instead there's reams of boring text to plough through, plus the FMV intro at the beginning of the game is really only of average quality, which is a shame.

Still, this is a lot better than Sega's first Saturn RPG, Virtual Hydlide, and at times it's even quite good fun and it's certainly big enough to warrant a purchase if you like these kinds of titles anyway. However, it's not going to win over any new recruits, because it gets very tedious at times. Nice enough, but apart from the battle graphics, there's nothing here game-wise that hasn't been seen on a 16-bit machine.

★★★





GALACTIC ATTACK - Turn your TV on its side!





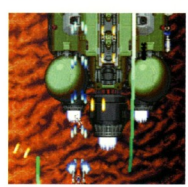
With the wealth of top-quality titles currently on release for the Saturn, it's quite a difficult task to a review a game that would slot itself into a "classic" genre. Without ever being a classic in the first place of course. This was released in Japan around four months ago under the name of LayerSection and although it's not ground-breaking in any way, it didn't do too badly over there. It probably won't do too badly over here either, because although it doesn't look the part or break back any technical boundaries, it's actually quite good fun.

Layersection will remind you of all those shoot 'em ups seen in the arcades about eight years ago - it's a vertically scrolling screen and your minuscule space craft must plough down all the aliens that get in the way. There's plenty of action and loads of power-ups and weapons to pick up, and it's all very much a frantic shoot 'em up fan's perfect game. At one point there's even the chance to turn your TV on its side when the action switches from vertical play to horizontal play - which is a nice idea even if it isn't very practical in execution (and not particularly healthy for your television).

However, although it's true that this in itself is a nice enough title, it's hardly what you'd expect to see on a console that can handle the likes of VF2 without so much as a sniff. Of course, that's no reason to slag it off outright, but it's difficult to imagine anyone rushing out to buy this, simply because it's a) not one of those titles that has a massive history behind it (such as the collection of Namco arcade classics currently doing the rounds on the Play station) and b) there's just to many other good titles available at the moment. It's true that there aren't many titles of this genre available on the Saturn, but even so, it still pales in comparison to both Sega's big three and even some of their first generation titles such as Panzer Dragoon.

Come on - be honest now - is this really the sort of game you coughed up £300 to play with your high-tech next generation gaming system? Playable it may be, but it's not really worth buying.
★★★





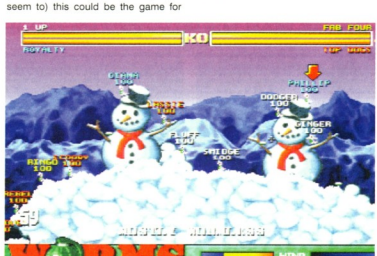
WORMS - Lemmings with guns!



There's few titles that have caused so much debate in the office this month as this one has. Currently enjoying rave reviews from almost every single games magazine, you could be led to believing that it is indeed one of the best titles ever to appear on a console, which in itself is quite difficult to believe considering that its roots lie in the Amiga. But this fact alone should give you some clue as to what to expect from the title - loads of piddly little characters wandering around a screen aka Lemmings and plenty of fiddly irritating gameplay. But, that's why some people like it.

Basically, Worms is Lemmings, but it's without the puzzles and with weapons instead. There's something like three million possible landscapes that the computer can generate and armed with your legion of worms, you'll have to outwit, out-puzzle and out-blast your opponent. Apparently this is an absolutely hilarious task, because you get to name your worms after famous people, then of course you can shout out "Ha ha! I've just taken out The Beatles and Cilla back with my rocket launcher!" Completely outrageous or what?

Yes, as you might be able to tell, this hasn't really grown on us much. But that's not to say it's a bad title. if you like the idea of playing Lemmings with guns over loads of levels with multi-player and sudden death options (which incidentally, a lot of people seem to) this could be the game for you. It's certainly had people here enraptured over the last month and could last for an infinity. But, if you don't have the patience for it, you may find it a dull and pointless exercise.
★★★







Multi-player mayhem guaranteed

VIRTUA RACING - Time Warner convert AM2's legendary racer!

Yes, it probably was a bit of a foolish idea, looking back on it. But you know what they say - sign up in haste and repent at leisure. At the time though, it must have seemed great - Virtua Racing was massively successful in the arcades and even in the light of a home conversion of Sega Rally, the prospect of playing an arcade perfect Virtua Racing is still extremely attractive. Unfortunately, in this case, things seem to have gone horribly wrong. Hopes may be high when the original Virtua Racing logo appears on the screen, but what happens after that can only be described as a travesty. This is nothing like the arcade Virtua Racing and it's probably fair to say that it's not even as good Virtua Racing on the 32X in terms of gameplay. The cars on the option screens may look fairly slick, but once into the game you'll find it difficult to believe that the two are somehow interlinked. The cars seem as though they're hovering over the track and there's no pull or heaviness to them so it's more like a go-karting game than an arcade racing conversion. In fact, Time Warner haven't even managed to get the course graphics right either. The basic lay-outs from the original title is in there, but it's lost something (a lot actually)in the translation - the course features look jagged and rough, and all the fine detail has been completely lost.

But that's only to be expected when you take on a game licence that was originally programmed by one of the best research teams in the world. If you take it as a game in its own right, it's an average enough racer that would keep anyone occupied for a fair while - just as most racing games probably would. It's pretty easy to get into and if it wasn't for the glaring fact that is nothing like the original and the obvious matter of a certain other monster title on offer this month, it may have been worth a look. It's not completely awful by any means, but it's almost impossible to imagine anyone buying this when they have either the choice of Sega Rally or Daytona USA, which despite its technical inadequecies remains far superior to this very lacking and disappointing conversion of an arcade classic.

★★









MAXIMUM SATURN

Now that the "Big Three" games are done and dusted, it's time for an all-new "Most Wanted" list for Sega Saturn software.

1. FIGHTING VIPERS
Don't be fooled by dodgy screenshots! We played Fighting Vipers in Japan and think it's absolutely incredible.

2. MANX TT SUPERBIKE
The next big AM3 product hasn't even hit the arcades yet and it's not even certain if the game will be converted to Saturn.It's all up to AM3's Tetsuya Mizoguchi...

3. VIRTUA COP 2
The original game was excellent and this is even better - but can it be done on the Saturn?

4. WIPEOUT
It's going to have to be very, very good to shape up to the PlayStation original. News soon.

5. STREET FIGHTER ALPHA
Capcom's conversion of their premiere fighting game is going to be hot. We've played it and it's very good indeed. Oh yes.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MAXIMUM

FIRESTORM - Can Core repeat history with their updated Thunderhawk?

Core Design have always been renowned for their innovative console titles and for no title does this seem more apt than Thunderhawk, originally released on console around two years ago (and on PC and Amiga in its very first incarnation about five years ago). This managed to perk up the rather gaunt face of the Mega-CD and at the time, even made the machine seem like a sound investment. Yes, it really was that good.

The result is surprisingly playable and at a first glance it's difficult to tell that that the two titles were ever related. The graphics, apart from the general helicopter theme, are unrecognisable from the Mega-CD version and are probably the slickest flight visuals ever seen on a Sega console. There's an increased number of missions for this version and the game runs much faster too. So, it's congratulations all round for the boys at Core.

But, there are a few misgivings to be found. First, and most importantly, the screen update, is at times, awful. Although you may not notice this when you're actually playing the game because your concentration is spent elsewhere, if you watch someone else playing it, it becomes glaringly apparent. It only take the slight movement of the helicopter to produce the old trees-out-of-nowhere trick and once noticed, it's difficult to overlook it. Also, although there are plenty of missions (all of them disturbingly familiar to any one who's played the Mega-CD version), some of them are very simple indeed.

Still, despite the clipping and some small mission sizes, Firestorm is still the best sim available for the Saturn - it knocks the stuffing out of Sega's forthcoming Wing Arms and is still mightily impressive. It just could have been that bit more slick.

★★★★



Top UK programmers hit Saturn!

But, a lot has happened since then. The Mega-CD has come and gone, replaced by much more capable gaming beasts. But, this doesn't mean that Core have disappeared off into oblivion. No, they've decided to create games for the Saturn now, and for their first one they've dragged Thunderhawk back out of the cupboard and given it the revamp treatment. And to coin a phrase - why not?

SONY PLAYSTATION

So... Saturn's got Virtua Cop, Sega Rally and the all-mighty Virtua Fighter 2. What's Sony got to match it? Well, as a line-up, it's difficult to find anything that really compares to Sega's "Big Three", but there's still some pretty remarkable software available this month, the best probably being the much-hyped, but actually very good Actua Soccer. The big disappointment has to be the conversion of Mortal Kombat 3 - yes, it's a relatively close translation but it's not worth the gushing adoration just about every other journal in the industry has given it - and worse still, the PAL translation is absolutely atrocious. We said it last month with Tekken; to put it bluntly, SCE seem to be paying absolutely no attention to the needs of the European games player - it's left to the English developers alone to produce quality PAL translations.

If Sega can put the effort into producing decent PAL versions of their big Saturn titles, why should PlayStation owners settle for anything less? MAXIMUM expects to see a greater commitment from Sony to its European user-base in 1996...

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

Flawless victory or PlayStation fatality?

In an attempt to corner the Christmas market, Sony Interactive have finally released their huge arcade conversion that was tempting prospective buyers far before the machine was even available. Mortal Kombat has finally arrived after the months of hype and an American launch, but faces stiff competition from the likes of Tekken, Virtua Fighter 2 and the forthcoming Street Fighter Alpha. Does this 2D digitised blood bath have what it takes in an increasingly sophisticated console market?

After an initial loading delay, we were treated to the arcade introduction detailing the various character backgrounds and general overview of Shao Kahn's attempted mastery of the outrealm. Next we ventured into the options screen and were pleasantly surprised at the sheer number of tweaks that you can make in honing your game to your exact specifications. Finally, we entered the character select screen itself, and began our Mortal Kombat in earnest.







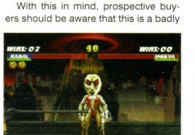
Sound-wise, this game is top-notch, with the eerie combat music tracks complementing the fighting whilst crunching and crystal-clear sound effects finish off the whole ensemble excellently. The only problem is the loading delay between effects which sometimes result in the abrupt end of the announcer's messages. What is much more apparent when playing this game is the simple fact that Sony have not even attempted any sort of PAL optimisation; there are very obtrusive and sizable borders throughout the game, and the speed of the characters is sluggish to say the least. Then again, those people who haven't played the import version possibly won't notice; but arcade fans should be prepared for the worst. The characters move very slowly as if wading through treacle, and this detracts from the overall feel of the game as well as changing the timing for the special moves and combos.

The Mortal Kombat game genre needs no introduction, and is loved by a multitude of beat 'em up fans the world over, but the **MAXIMUM** team feels that the gameplay is too shallow and relies too heavily on the finishing moves for the majority of the entertainment. This is just personal taste; what is important to the gamer is the quality of this conversion, and whether fans of the game should buy it.

With this in mind, prospective buyers should be aware that this is a badly bordered and slow version of a game that suffers from loading times, some which become painfully apparent in mid-combat, such as the Shang Tsung morphing. Apart from these flaws, this is a carbon copy of the first MK 3 coin-op with slightly smaller digitised characters. Unfortunately, in a frenzied attempt to scoop an exclusive, Sony have succeeded in creating an outdated version of the game that has already been superseded in arcades by Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3 (featuring new characters and backgrounds); a revamp that is being transferred to the Saturn (and Ultra 64) for a 1996 release. To sum up, this is a rushed conversion, and one that should not be repeated unless Sony wish their high standards to slip.

★★★







FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2

- Going head-to-head with Agile Warrior





Core Design take to the skies with Thunderhawk sequel!

Core Design have earned themselves two reputations: one for creating innovative and very playable titles (set to continue with the likes of Tomb Raiders), whilst the second is less prestigious as they have also become famous for backing ill-fated technology. Having restricted themselves to the doomed Mega-CD and 32X, Core have now seen the light and the PlayStation now ironically plays host to a sequel of the game that put them on the Mega-CD map.

Firestorm is as close to a proper flight simulation as the Sony machine is set to see in the foreseeable future. Controlling a futuristic helicopter, the player is dropped into eight battle scenarios, which later pave the way to seven more complex missions. In complete contrast to the 'wham, bam, kerblam' antics of Virgin's apocalyptic Agile Warrior, Firestorm requires planning and genuine precision on the player's part. The missions vary from seek and destroy zones to guarding a convoy, and each is fraught with danger. Having selected the mission, the player is then invited to tool up their chopper or take the CPU-advised payload. The helicopter can only manage a specific weight, so opting for thousands of air-to-ground missile is not an option. The 3D play area is then displayed with a surprising amount of ground detail but, sadly, some atrocious clipping in places. The latter is particularly noticeable in the canyon-based missions, and it is all-too common for the player to fly towards what appears to be a gap in the landscape but is revealed to be another part of a wall at the last minute!

The missions carry a number of main objectives and targets and anything else in the game is unimportant - a major shortcoming. Prolonged play reveals that all the missions are played within a set square area and the main targets are highlighted by the on board computer. As such, although the weight of enemy planes and vehicles initially proves daunting, the same ploy of heading straight for the main targets, taking them out and running like hell soon proves a little repetitive. Granted, there is the option to stay and fight, but the missions are still rather too short. That said, Firestorm is still the best of the 3D blasters the PlayStation has to offer, but its shortcomings prevent it from the recognition the Mega-CD version earned.

★★★★











TWISTED METAL

One of the greatest restrictions imposed within 3D games is that the player is never really given a free run of the play area. Linear paths nearly always restrict the player to a predetermined route and, no matter how interesting the horizon looks, the option to have a little look around is rarely afforded. Enter Sony with Twisted Metal; a seemingly innocuous, under-hyped title which offers the player control over a number of high-powered, suitably tooled-up vehicles with the basic mission of blowing seven shades out of like-minded CPU players. However, while Twisted Metal initially dumps the player into a small arena roughly the size of a circus ring, a few rounds later and you'll find yourself running amok across a typical-looking suburban landscape that wouldn't look out of place in a US sitcom. And this is one of the strongest points in Twisted Metal - the freedom the huge play areas allow for a game where not only does the player have to perform fantastic turns to lose their opponent, but they get the chance to run wherever they like!

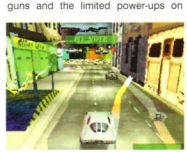
The game opens with a choice of vehicles. Twisted Metal is far from your normal battle game, and anyone expecting a serious rival to Assault Rigs with hi-tech tanks should look elsewhere. Instead, the Sony game offers Police cars, a yellow New York cab, and an Ice Cream van (amongst others), each of which comes equipped with basic strengths and weaknesses, alongside a range of armoury to blow the opposition out of the game. With the vehicle chosen, the 3D play area is unveiled and, to begin with, the player is pitted against a solo opponent. Using the infinite supply of guns and the limited power-ups on board and hidden within buildings punctuating the play area, both vehicles have an energy bar, and the first person to see theirs reach zero is out. With the warm-up stage completed, a city block awaits with four opponents chasing the player, while the aforementioned suburbia then plays host to the full gamut of cars and trucks.

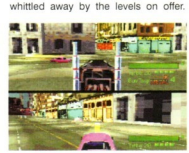
Sony have really tried hard with Twisted Metal and while it plays very well, the game is far too short. The handful of levels may indeed offer the user the chance to explore the entire play area, but the downside is that the size of the levels are proportionally whittled away by the levels on offer.



Presumably realising this, Sony have added a split-screen two-player mode, but not enough of the play area is shown and this proves particularly confusing in the heat of battle. A playable game, but one which is probably destined for obscurity.

★★★







ASSAULT RIGS - Sony success or CyberSled on steroids?

The company formerly known as Psygnosis is well into the second phase of its PlayStation game development programme, and is hoping to wow the gaming public once again with a second wave of quality software titles. Spearheading this campaign are Assault Rigs and Krazy Ivan. Assault Rigs places you at the helm of a Virtual Reality battle tank in the 'ultimate arcade experience of the future'. On each of the 40+ levels, you must traverse the virtual battle arena, firing at both stationary and moving opponents before whilst collecting a set number of power gems in order to open the exit. This is essentially in game in its entirety, as despite the differing theatres of war and increasingly complex level designs, the level objectives remain the same.

Positioned every so often throughout the game are arena levels that provide a slight diversion to the task at hand; where a larger number of enemies must be culled and a huge number of gems collected in one huge placing area. These levels (of which three exist) are most similar to CyberSled (the game's main competitor), but the quality of the title is superior to Namco's effort, and the action is more orientated towards the likes of Twisted Metal.

This game, whilst sounding quite entertaining in theory, unfortunately has a variety problems in practice. Apart from the headache-inducing camera angles, the graphics glitch badly and the game itself is far too easy to complete. It was hoped that the simultaneous two-player action would spruce matters up a bit, but added little to the overall nature of the game; being far less fun than multi-player Doom. This is one of the game's fundamental problems; it is too linear and (despite the diverse levels) is not sufficiently entertaining to keep you enthralled. A mildly entertaining title, spoilt by a number of niggling flaws, mainly in the gameplay department.

★★★









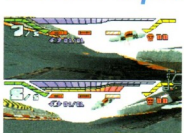


HI-OCTANE

With WipeOut sitting in virtually every PAL machine in the UK, Bullfrog find themselves up against stiff competition as they unveil an updated version of their PC classic. With slightly less finesse than the SIE game, Hi-Octane follows the same lines by inviting the player to partake in a series of death or glory races across a number of torturous tracks. The game is essentially the same as the PC original, with six vehicles at your disposal and the tracks littered with power-ups and extra weaponry needed to gain an advantage over the opposition. However, one major advantage over the PC version is that Bullfrog have taken the opportunity to add a split-screen, two-player mode. Oddly enough, the addition of a second player only makes things worse, and the screen jerks around so much when utilising the split-screen as to make the game virtually unplayable - while we appreciate Bullfrog incorporated the option as a strike against the need for two PlayStations for linked WipeOut, it only goes to hamper the game further.

Such is the power of the PlayStation that it comes to something when last year's top of the range PC game looks sorely dated. Hi-Octane's courses and vehicles can't compete with those in WipeOut, and it even fails to match the originality of Mindscape's Cyberspeed. Whereas WipeOut required genuine skill to master its cornering and overtaking, the courses in Hi-Octane have less involving and, with the exception of the odd shortcut, there's very little else to surprise. Granted, the six vehicles do feature differing abilities, but

Can Bullfrog compete with the awesome WipeOut?





the actual racing itself doesn't have that vital edge to spur the player on to more glory. If Hi-Octane had been released a year or so back, no doubt Saturn owners would have been in awe. However, WipeOut and Ridge Racer have shown the potential for PlayStation racers, and the Bullfrog offering comes across as little more than a weak PC port. A classic example of how far games have progressed in the last year.

★★







GOAL STORM

With the interminable Striker '96 relegated to the Endsleigh League of PlayStation football games, Konami run on to the pitch with a PAL version of their Japanese title, Winning Eleven. A roaring success with our Eastern cousins, Goal Storm seems to have it all: huge polygon players, replays from every conceivable viewpoint, and an array of bicycle kicks and diving headers. Sadly, it also has a simple way of scoring virtually every time and extremely limited playability.

Offering a full range of International teams, leagues and tournaments, Goal Storm keeps up with the likes of FIFA and Striker '96 as far as the options menu. From here, however, it all goes pear-shaped. Initial impressions are favourable as the huge sprites run on to the pitch. The players are polygon-based, with the rough edges light-sourced for extra detail - similarly, the pitch is large and detailed with nets that actually ripple when the ball hits the back. Control over the player is simplistic, with the four facia buttons used to effect passes, lobs and shots, with the CPU assisting by selecting the player nearest the ball and switching control when necessary. In addition to these basic moves, though, the L and R buttons come into play when the player is in the penalty area with a well-timed press of the top buttons prompting the said bicycle kicks and headers. Pulling these shots off at first is a real





treat, and the action replays show them from the best possible views, enhancing the glory. However, after mere minutes of play it soon becomes apparent that the CPU goalies have no way of stopping the majority of diagonal shots and thus high-scoring games are a matter of course.

Sadly, Goal Storm is another Sony soccer casualty with FIFA still reigning supreme, as the PlayStation-owning fans await Gremlin's imminent Actua Soccer. Which is light years ahead of this lacking effort.

★★

ACTUA SOCCER - Is this the greatest of the 3D football sims?



Gremlin's entrance into the overcrowded PlayStation football market has to be very good to compete with the glut of recent soccer titles - although they haven't got much to be worried about from most of the competition - Striker and Goal Storm just don't cut the mustard. However, as **MAXIMUM** readers will know, FIFA is pretty damn good. The question is, can Actua Soccer better it?

In terms of visuals, there is absolutely no doubt that Actua is far superior. The pitch is more detailed and far smoother than FIFA, and the players themselves are by far and away the best seen yet in a PlayStation soccer game. There's none of the sprite-scaling pokery as depicted in FIFA. It's a full-on polygon frenzy, with exceptional motion captured players. The detail is quite phenomenal - there is absolutely no doubt that the game just can't be touched on a visual level. This factor alone will probably result in a fair few sales - if you saw Actua head-to-head with FIFA in your local software emporium, there'd be little doubt as to what game would sell.

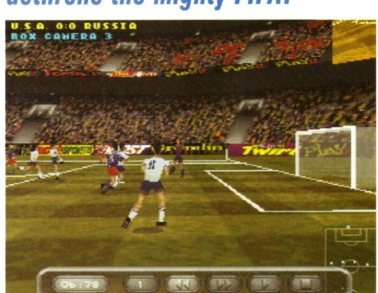
On the aural side of things, we're treated to yet another famous commentator providing incisive remarks. This time, MC Barry Davies is in the house, supplying what is probably the best voice-over to date - it's not quite as repetitive as FIFA's Motson vocals, and although its appeal is strictly short-term, it serves its purpose in bringing players into the game.

But of course, it's the gameplay and the wealth of options which makes the difference between an Endsleigh league simulator and a true Premiership contender and Actua certainly comes up trumps. The control mode takes a short while to get to grips with, and the choice of camera angle is extremely important (some of the more spectacular views aren't exactly conducive to great gameplay), but once you've got the hang of it, the action is richly rewarding.

After last month's experience with FIFA, it would have been too easy to write off any new contender, but there's just no doubt that Actua Soccer is an excellent simulator that's definitely the best soccer-orientated product on the market. It's also great to see an English company producing the best PlayStation translation of our national sport.

★★★★

Can Gremlin's first footy effort dethrone the mighty FIFA?











MAXIMUM PLAYSTATION

Despite having inferior sound capabilities compared to the Saturn, the PlayStation has been blessed with some excellent in-game tunes. Here are our favourites:

1 RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION
Awesome European Dance sounds ranging from the mellow vibes of MAXIMUM ZONE to the frantic jungle stomping of the victory tune.

2 WIPEOUT
More banging tunes that complement the game perfectly, this time courtesy of top UK dance acts and the excellent in-house team Coldstorage.

3 DOOM
The fantastically eerie soundtracks of this classic retains all of the more excellent when you realise they are chip-generated.

4 ARC THE LAD
The orchestral scores of this Japanese-only RPG are beautifully constructed and another triumph of the PlayStation's sound chip. Unfortunately the game failed to live up to expectations.

5 TEKKEN
Thankfully, the Namco musicians ignored the frankly terrible cross-up tunes into some of the most catchy groove anthems since Street Fighter.

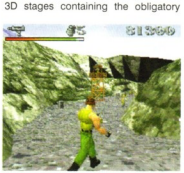
CHART COMPILED BY MAXIMUM

LONE SOLDIER

The advent of 32-bit technology gives developers the chance to take old ideas and recreate them using perspectives the likes of the Megadrive and Super NES could never handle. As such, with the likes of Warhawk taking the battle against the alien hordes into the third dimension, Telstar have gone one better and looked back to Capcom and SNK's Commando and Ikari Warriors coin-ops for their inspiration.

Lone Soldier casts the player as the eponymous marine, yomping into six 3D stages containing the obligatory army bad boys and, towards the end of the game, an alien base.

While the idea is sound, however, Lone Soldier's greatest problem is its speed - or lack of it. The aforementioned Commando and Ikari Warriors were successful because they offered uncomplicated blasting action coupled with fast-paced stages. With such a game now deemed far to simplistic for the Sony machine, Lone Soldier finds itself struggling with a sluggish targeting system and a main sprite who moves far too slowly to bring any pace to the proceedings. The action is viewed from behind the huge player sprite, with the six locations scrolling towards the player, bringing the enemy as it does so. Drifting directly in front of your sprite is a large cursor and the L and R buttons allows for the precise positioning of this, with a machine gun cutting a path through the enemy hordes via a quick press of the buttons. In addition to the expected foot soldiers, the Lone Soldier also runs into huge vans, tanks, and gun turrets which give way to stranger beasts and alien technology towards the end of the game. To combat these, though, conveniently-timed weapon drops equip the player with flame-throwers, bazookas and an M40 - while the initially limited supply of grenades can also be bolstered this way.









With the idea of placing an old idea in 3D is fine, it does seem a pity that a little more imagination wasn't used when creating the game's foes. Only occasionally does the perspective offer any innovations - a trio of abseiling squaddies who drop from above, for example - and with the game following a very 'stop-start' pattern of yomping towards foes, cutting a path through them and marching on to the next batch, a little variety would have been appreciated. Sadly, this just about sums up Lone Soldier, and while Telstar's game is fun in the short-term you can't help but reflect just what could have been.

★★

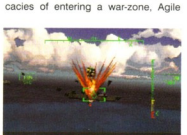
AGILE WARRIOR

Virgin's PlayStation debut offers more explosions and destruction possibilities than the entire Die Hard trilogy of films. Commanding a F-111X Fighter plane, the player finds themself dropped in the heart of a number of warzones, each of which contains a number of targets and related substages. However, if things are starting to sound a little similar to the events seen in Core's Firestorm, any real similarity ends beyond the 3D scrolling. Forget weapon payloads and the intricacies of entering a war-zone, Agile Warrior revels in its sheer, wanton destruction. Whether it be locating a space shuttle or nuking a pacific island, you can guarantee every mission in Agile Warrior ends in a huge explosion of some kind. Similarly, while destroying objects in Firestorm sends a tiny figure scuttling for cover from the wreckage, Agile Warrior not only lets the player kill the survivor, but also shows the poor unfortunate erupting in a gout of blood! Similarly, if a pilot of a felled plane bails out, the player can shoot the escapee for extra points and all that remains is a severed torso dropping gracefully to earth.

From the moment the game begins with an Afterburner-style zoom from behind the plane into the cockpit, the emphasis is on speed. Control over the plane is limited to accelerating and decelerating, summoning a targeting map, and switching between the dozens of weapons on offer. All the usual air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles are available, and locking on and firing is simplicity itself. However, such is the speed of the action that even if you have time to watch a felled helicopter spiral into the ground (with explosion to follow - naturally), the exhilaration generated will have you locking on to the next target already. In terms of sheer playability, Agile Warrior has it sussed. Extra weapons are found by engaging in the main aim of the game and blowing up installations to free a floating icon, whilst collection is simply a matter of flying through the freed item. Even the addition of a FMV mission briefing at the start of game cannot disguise the fact that your mission, should you accept it, is nothing but a series of ground attacks. Ultimately, this is also Agile Warrior's failing. As exciting as blowing everything up is, it also proves a little stifling after a while and the game's lack of longevity soon becomes apparent. Yes, the addition of viewing the action through a missile adds to the fun, but even so the missions become a little limited after prolonged play. As a game you can pick up every now and then to enjoy a quick blast, Agile Warrior is untouchable, but anyone wanting a little more depth will be investing in Core's game.

★★★★









A true PlayStation apocalypse!

ALONE IN THE DARK: JACK'S BACK

- But is it too little, too late?



Anyone expecting Infogrames' first contribution to the PlayStation to feature Asterix, TinTin or any other licensed French hero will be surprised to see the Gallic company scouring their PC back catalogue instead. Based on the PC version of Alone In The Dark II - one of the most groundbreaking arcade/adventures to date - the Sony game runs under the title of Jack's Back - pertaining to the return of the game's master villain, one One-Eyed Jack. A big-time smuggler, murderer and all-round bad-guy, Jack has extended his range of crimes to add kidnapping to his CV. As such, stepping into the immaculately polished shoes of the game's hero, Edward Carnby, your mission is twofold: rescue the child (Grace) and in the process avenge the murder of an old friend offed by Jack. The game is set in the roaring twenties, in a coastal area of California lovingly-entitled Hell's Kitchen, and the Infogrames' graphic designers have had a field-day creating a series of rooms and locations which could have stepped out of the pages of one of HP Lovecraft's Cthulu books.

Play begins with an unarmed Carnby exploring a series of 3D locations in search of weapons and stumbling across members of One-Eyed Jack's crew. As such, initially the game allows the user to get to grip with the often sluggish controls and master the



DEFCON 5



The Tyron Corporation specialise in automating security systems on distant mining worlds. Their automated robot guards are regarded as some of the best the 22nd Century has to offer, and in Millenium's new title for SIE, the player is given 48 hours to alter an existing system over to the Tyron mechanism. However, while the switching of a few switches doesn't exactly sound like the most exciting premise for a video game, the FMV intro furthers the plot as things go predictably wrong. As you enter the building and start work, an alien attack force blasts the building and destroys a central part of the computer base. As a result, things are complicated with the aforementioned robots running wild and the odd appearance of the alien marines as you race against time to set things right.

With a scenario as well crafted as this, by rights Defcon 5 should be the PlayStation equivalent of a disaster movie. However, one thing stops Millenium's game being a serious rival to the likes of The Towering Inferno or Airport 75: a severe lack of pace. If the base is indeed under siege, it is obvious only a skeleton staff of aliens doing the rounds. As you tinker with the icons needed to put things right and communicate with the base's computer (VOS), there are more interminable corridors to wander through than a dozen episodes of Blake's 7. Initially, these 3D areas give the impression of a Doom sequence where the alien hordes block the way to the next terminal. Nope, as you head off after returning the base to your control only the occasional skirmish keeps you busy. The whole point of Defcon is that the game hots up as the player restores key aspects of security system, but it all happens so slowly any wish to continue is rapidly eroded. If atmosphere was what the programmers of Defcon were after, they have succeeded in their quest. But if only drawing the player into to what could have been a very engrossing idea had been their main goal.

★★

PGA TOUR '96

The PlayStation golf market is every bit as busy as the soccer scene, and it falls to EA's classic PGA Tour to become the first to tee off. Beating US Gold's World Cup Golf and Gremlin's Actua Golf by a month, PGA's pedigree is probably enough to generate a few thousand sales alone. Unfortunately, while PGA is indeed a playable golf game, this Sony incarnation is the weakest of the series yet and surprisingly fails at a number of hurdles itS Megadrive and PC siblings leapt easily.



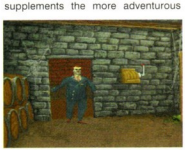


Opening with an atrocious piano tune reminiscent of a Richard Clayderman track, a full menu of skins, tournaments and practice rounds awaits the armchair Balesteros. The play screen will be familiar to anyone whole has played PGA on another machine, with the action viewed from behind the player's suitably attired sprite with a power bar to the top-right of the screen. Every aspect of play can be tinkered with, from the choice of club to the sprite's stance before striking the ball. It seems, though, that so much work have gone on these smaller points, that fundamental problems seem to have slipped through the net. While basic driving and chipping is easy to effect and looks superb, the behaviour of the ball is very odd indeed. The actual flight is fine, but as soon as the ball hits the ground it tends to stop dead and barely rolls at all - a fact that will have die-hard golfers up in arms. This problem stretches to putting, too, and the precise system EA have implemented is wasted as the ball trundles along only to stop dead as opposed to rolling to a slow stop.

Quite frankly, PGA Tour is the weakest of the golf games due and really lets down the remarkable series quite badly. Armchair golfers are best advised to await the efforts lined up by Gremlin and US Gold.

★★

art of fisticuffs, targeting the guns and weapons on offer, and picking up and using items using Carnby's inventory screen. To be fair, although the controls are a little imprecise, the overall method of collecting and using objects is simple and effective, and the player is soon drawn into a game which evokes an atmosphere of doom and reveals more and more hidden plots and twists as the player progresses. After a handful of puzzles are completed one of the twists is the inclusion of the kidnappee, Grace, into the action. Giving her cumbersome guards the slip, Grace offers a different slant to the proceedings than Edward as the little girl is incapable of protecting herself physically, and must thus use stealth to bypass guards. This adds an element of logical thinking to the action, and supplements the more adventurous side of Edward's role perfectly.



There is a downside, however. Alone In The Dark: Jack's Back does indeed offer a long-lasting mystery, but the imminent Resident Evil does everything so much better and we feel the Infogrames game may be lost in the clamour to buy Capcom's similar tale of monsters and mystery. The fact that Jack's Back is a PC conversion dates it already, and the ported polygon characters and backdrops just can't hold a candle to the light-sourced snakes and monsters lurking in Resident Evil. If you can't wait until March, though, Jack's Back still offers more surprises than most of the Sony games on offer - and can also claim to be the first 'true' arcade/adventure for the system.

★★★



MAXIMUM PLAYSTATION

It's been one of the hardest fought contests yet, with myriad releases the world over. The question has to be, how do the various PlayStation soccer games match up? Which one's best, and which unfortunate release get the **MAXIMUM** caning? To answer your questions, examing the following list.

1 ACTUA SOCCER
BY GREMLIN INTERACTIVE

2 FIFA SOCCER
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS

3 GOAL STORM
BY KONAMI

4 STRIKER '96
BY TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE

5 HYPER FORMATION SOCCER
BY HUMAN

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY MAXIMUM



SNK NEO GEO

Despite the wealth of material currently in the pipeline, **MAXIMUM** is disappointed to see just the one Neo Geo release this month. Having said that, it's an eagerly awaited title - the latest chapter in the classic Samurai Shodown series, with a home-only RPG based on the game due in the New Year. The games in development as we speak tend to veer away from the beat 'em up titles that have been the staple diet for Neo Geo owners over the last few years, with a huge array of blasters in the works. It has to be said that it is about time that the machine had a greater variety of software - after all, what use is another combat game if it can't match the power of the unforgetable King of Fighters '95? It's in this respect that Samurai Shodown 3 tends to suffer slightly - good though it is, it's just not in the same league as King of Fighters which remains the benchmark for fighting game excellence...

Also, despite a huge amount of coverage in the Japanese press last month, there is still no more news regarding SNK's end of the Sega deal. As we write, there is nothing new to report on which Sega titles or characters will make their way on to Neo Geo. Still, **MAXIMUM** aims to keep you posted, so stay tuned...

SAMURAI SHODOWN 3 - Third time lucky for this sword slashing cult beat 'em up?

As is blatantly obvious by now, SNK have spent the last two years saturating the arcade and home markets with a string of 2D one-on-one beat 'em ups. These have ranged from the mediocre (Aggressors of Dark Kombat) to the seminal (King of Fighters '95), and despite the mammoth number of other fighting titles in arcades and at home, SNK have decided to develop and release yet another version of their successful Samurai Shodown series. Can a third instalment of Katana-wielding action hold up to the likes of Tekken 2 and Marvel Super Heroes, or is this the same game in a different package?

Twelve characters are selectable, and all the extremely familiar options are available, but Shodown 3 benefits from a rather ingenious revamp in the shape of a choice of alignment and competence level. This initial choice of whether your character follows the path of good or evil is an excellent addition as apart from cosmetic differences (such as a more menacing uniform for the evil players), there are a number of special moves limited to good or evil samurais only. This adds to the already recognisable gameplay, but all the characters have undergone intense playtesting to ensure that they remain equal to each other with regards to their combat expertise (there is no overly powerful 'Earthquakes' in this version of Shodown) at the start of a battle.

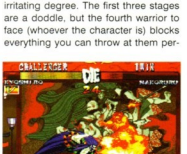
The game itself plays excellently in two-player mode, and remains the same to the tried and tested Shodown formula, so expect no more and no less in that department. Combos are virtually nonexistent, with the fighters relying instead on timing to bring their weapon to bear as quickly as possible. The usual Rage Gauge makes another appearance, with blows enraging each contestant until their maximum anger levels are reached - and a special move may be attempted. The word 'attempt' should be stressed here, as most of the ultra-moves are exceptionally difficult to pull off in the heat of a battle; a fault that leaves some fully-powered characters at a great disadvantage compared to others. Other points in this game's favour are the lush backdrops that are constantly moving and change on the third round of each fight, and the music which is mostly experimental woopings and rhythmic clanking that complements the action beautifully.







The only major fault with this game is the difficulty level. The MAXIMUM team appreciate a difficult game, but Samurai Shodown 3 is difficult to an irritating degree. The first three stages are a doddle, but the fourth warrior to face (whoever the character is) blocks everything you can throw at them perfectly, and counters with some impossibly-timed moves. Then the combat ranges from stupidly easy to teeth-gnashingly difficult before a final devilish boss is faced in a fantastically detailed arena.



Despite reservations regarding the difficulty level, this is an excellently detailed and extremely playable beat 'em up, maintaining SNK's usual high standards. The general beat 'em up connoisseur may find that there is simply nothing sufficiently different to warrant a purchase, but Neo Geo Shodown fans certainly won't be disappointed.

★★★★

MAXIMUM NEO GEO

After our new last issue regarding the deal between SNK and Sega, here are the top five Sega characters we'd like to see in Neo Geo games.

1. VIRTUA COMBAT KILLER
The gauntlet has been thrown down! The entire Virtua Fighter crew has been challenged to bout of fisticuff action by all of SNK's beat-em-up characters!

2. KAGE-MARU'S NINJA CHALLENGE
The mighty Virtua Fighter ninja challenges Hanro, Fauma and any other willing combatant into the virtual arena for a spot of shuriken-related antics.

3. RAGE AND SMARTY'S POLICE QUEST
Join the Virtua Cops in a 2D scrolling beat-em-up as the battle their way through Southtown Virtua City in order to rescue the kidnapped Janet Marshall.

4. SHUN DI'S QUAFFING MASTERCLASS
Challenge Shun Di, Erik the (World Heroes) viking and Tung Fu Rue to a drinking competition. Control their staggering whilst a panel of judges award style marks.

5. SONIC SHODOWN 3
Tails insulting Hulahnia's mother results in a gathering of his Samurai Shodown 3 chums and a 2D pitched battle between the two camps.

INFORMATION DREAMED UP BY MAXIMUM

IT'S OFFICIAL!

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR CHRISTMAS TURKEYS...





... BUT THANKS TO PLAYSTATION PLUS YOU WON'T BE DOOMED TO A DIET OF LEFT-OVERS!

PlayStation Plus January Issue on sale December 15th (Warning : contains more than one exclusive ingredient!)

THE GOOD PSX GUIDE

You simply won't find a more comprehensive guide to the very best in PlayStation entertainment this Christmas.

PC/CD ROM

There's a fair range of decent quality wares released on the PC market this month, with the two big releases both emanating from the Lords of All Things PC - LucasArts. Both The Dig and the eagerly awaited Rebel Assault 2 arrive this month for review and we dare say that from what you might have read elsewhere, you probably think that both titles are must-haves. Well, no - but we'll leave the real criticism for the reviews themselves.

One thing which did annoy us intensely was our apparent inability to get hold of one of the new NVidia PC boards, along with the first game, Virtua Fighter Remix. However, from what little we have seen of the game, we can confirm that it's by far the best fighting game available on PC and pounds Argonaut's awful FX Fighter into the ground. With games like this just around the corner, along with interesting titles in development for the "vanilla" PC such as Duke Nukem 3D, PC gaming grows ever more intriguing.

REBEL ASSAULT 2 - Can all-new sequel better lacking predecessor?

Rebel Assault was arguably the title that changed the face of PC gaming forever, and tempted thousands of PC users into purchasing CD-ROM drives with promises of unbelievable spooled visuals, fantastic digital sound and games of huge depth, length and playability. The first Rebel Assault title scored highly on the first two points, but failed utterly in the playability department. Still, it sold by the bucket-load and became a cult game with nearly the strength of following and same status as Doom. And now, two years later, the sequel has arrived, promising smoother graphics and a greater challenge. Is this another leap forward in gaming technology, or merely a spruced-up version of the original with the same problems?

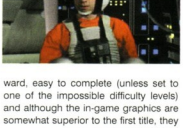
We'll let you draw your own conclusions, but the visuals initially left us gasping for breath. With the exceptions of Philosoma and Krazy Ivan on the PlayStation, the **MAXIMUM** team had never experienced such crisp and free-flowing CG sequences as the ones introducing Rebel Assault 2. The quality of these visuals should not be doubted; they are some of the finest yet witnessed on the PC. The only major fault is the out of sync mouth movements when characters spoke (due to the low frame rate of the animations), but this is still a vast improvement over the appallingly mouthed chatter of the first game.

However, when the actual controllable action started, our enthusiasm started to falter. An initial mission sees the Rookie Rebel pilot (you) negotiating a series of corridors on an imperial cruiser in an attempt to gain control of a Millennium Falcon-style vessel. On foot and armed









with a blaster, you must halt at every passageway junction to fire at stormtroopers that appear from one of up to four corners. And that is it. Hardly Dark Forces, and not much challenge at all.

Once the Millennium-style ship is under your control, you must fly it to safety, and this is where our attitude to Rebel Assault 2 changed from uncertainty to anger and frustration. After an impressive spooled flyby, your craft has to weave between beams and barriers that zoom towards you in the usual pre-rendered manner. As the first barrier approached, we opted to move the ship upwards to avoid it; only instead of a gliding ascent, our craft decided to twitch spasmodically and fall into the scenery. Unperturbed, we tried the same plan again at the next obstacle... and it worked, our vessel rose to avoid the metal beam, but hit the roof of the tunnel and was buffeted about while we frantically fought with the mouse in a vain attempt to steady the ship. We failed, and our brave rookie died in an impressive explosive inferno which was marvellous to watch.

Unfortunately, the graphical splendour of the death scene wore a tad thin after the fifth time when we crashed into the tunnel walls again through no fault of our own. It was at this point that we experienced the underlying and fundamental problem with both Rebel Assaults 1 and 2: The control system is the absolute pits; pure and simple. The description of our steering difficulties can be applied to the speeder bike level (which was a great graphical disappointment after the hype), the TIE fighter stage, and the somewhat tedious X-Wing attack levels where wave after wave of tie-fighters appear in the same formation. Whether using mouse or joystick, on every level of the game (bar the walk-throughs) the problem is the same; your vehicle jolts and twitches with a life of its own, and there is nothing you can do about it except to employ tiny steadying movements in the hope that the craft doesn't take offense to your attempt at control and vehemently bounce around the screen.

Although the overwhelming problem with Rebel Assault 2, controllability isn't the only failing. The game is straightforward, easy to complete (unless set to one of the impossible difficulty levels) and although the in-game graphics are somewhat superior to the first title, they seem not to gel together as well into a continuous storyline, and the final level is something of an anticlimax (to put it tactfully). The sheer linearity of the game, coupled with poor acting from the assembled cast and less than impressive level design have succeeded in creating an extremely disappointing title that should only appeal to Star Wars junkies and masochistic fanatics of the original. Only the outstanding visuals, slick presentation and wealth of additional options saved this game's bacon. It will probably still be the Yuletide PC number one, though.

★★

Yet more FMV-based gameplay





TILT





One of the first things that the development team who produced Tilt told us, was that they had done a tremendous amount of painstaking research to create a completely authentic pinball simulator. We're sure that this was due to diligence and commitment to their craft... and not because pinball machines are most often found lurking in the shady corners of public houses.

Whatever the reason, it has certainly paid off, as Tilt is one of the most varied and realistic pinball sims we've seen yet. It's actually not quite as realistic to play as Empire's Pro Pinball, but with six tables to choose from as a posed to Pro's one, Tilt's longevity more than makes up for the slight downgrading of performance.

The tables on offer range from Gangsters to Space Quest, with viewing options in either 2D scrolling, 3D full table or 3D scrolling. The rendered graphics are stunning, and notable for their accurate portrayal of the traditional tables, with some really nice touches in the reflective and transparent surfaces.

Side-games and cut-scenes add some interesting variety and longevity to the play.

An altogether authentic experience in pinball wizardry reasonably priced at £29.99, it's well worth taking for a spin.

★★★★

MAXIMUM PC/CD ROM

William Shatner beamed down for a quick chat with **MAXIMUM** about his involvement with the production of TekWar, reviewed on these pages.

"I believe that game technology is the entertainment medium for the future, and I was very enthusiastic when Intracorp approached me about making my TekWar books into a game. My involvement has been mostly creative, on the direction and story boarding side, as I am not really technically adept. I admire kids today - they are spoon fed with the technology from a very early age, but people like me have a great deal to offer this evolving industry. I believe that as the more creative minds of the film and TV industry merge with the bright young minds of the computer industry, we will begin to see the dawning of a whole new era in computer gaming - and I fully intend to be involved."

THE DIG

Once more, the awesome might behind the "big screen" brings its influence to PC gaming with the release of The Dig on PC CD-ROM. Written by Sean Clark and based on an idea by Steven Spielberg, this graphic adventure by LucasArts takes the traditional craft of archaeology far beyond the perimeters of our galaxy.

In an attempt to prevent a collision with earth, Commander Boston Low takes a team into outer space to the Asteroid Attila. But this floating hunk of granite is not all it seems to be...

It's actually an alien craft, which springs into life once disturbed and leaves the explorers stranded on an unfamiliar planet in the far reaches of the galaxy.

Unlike many of LucasArts' games so far, this is not a wacky and amusing adventure, but takes on an altogether more serious tone.

When we first loaded it on to our PC, we were disappointed by the unimaginative and frankly, too obvious puzzles. But, after about 20 minutes of play we were well and truly hooked. Graphically stunning (though perhaps a little dated in its style) with well developed storyline and characters, the puzzles quickly became more challenging, and with the exception of one or two that were just too obscure, set at just the right level to keep a serious adventure freak rivetted (and not too hacked off).

As the play progressed further, a modicum of the familiar humour began to seep through, and the atmospheric light-sourcing and sound effects created an altogether absorbing experience.

We have no hesitation in recommending this to all adventure fanatics, though inexperienced adventurers may want to wet their feet with something a little less taxing first time out.

★★★★





TEKWAR





William Shatner is probably best known for his galaxy saving, alien shmoozing activities at the helm of the Starship Enterprise, and is undoubtedly not short of a dollar or two, yet he still refuses to hang up his lycra bodysuit and holster his phaser.

His latest *enterprise*, if you will, is the conversion of his TekWar stories into an interactive game - with a little help from US development company Intracorp.

TekWar is a 3D action-adventure, which involves not only plenty of first person action, but also requires a good deal of puzzling and strategy skills to conquer. Set in the year 2045, the city's authorities are unable to halt the distribution of a highly addictive (and often fatal) mind hallucinogenic called Tek.

As a recently thawed ex-cop who has spent the last 5 years in cryogenic sleep, the player embarks upon a mission to discover the secrets of the underworld TekLords' consortium and restore justice to the crime ravaged streets of LA. Armed with a variety of weapons the mission is to seek out and arrest the seven territorial TekLords.

Players are challenged by a number of enemy agents. But the bad guys are not always distinguishable from the good guys... draw a gun on a civilian and the entire staff of the LA PD fall on you like a ton of bricks. About the only really negative comment about this game is that the baddies often start shooting when they are barely two pixels high, which is very frustrating in a crowded high street as you flail your gun around aimlessly whilst your life points tick away to nothing.



Graphically stunning, TekWar uses the powerful "Build" engine, and with seven districts to explore freely it is very easy to immerse yourself fully in the environment - especially when you are in multi-player mode across a network with up to 15 other gun wielding loonies.

In our opinion, at first glance it may look like another pretty Doom clone, but look a little closer and you'll see TekWar has enough new angles and ideas to make it stand as a cool game in its own right.

★★★

WORMS - Small invertebrates strike back with high-calibre weaponry!

Across the country, thousands of homes and offices are suffering from a serious case of worms. No, not the wriggly ones that make every household pets life a misery, but the animated sprites that have infested **MAXIMUM**'S PCs, together with every other computer in the building. Team 17's new strategy game - Worms - is released this month on the PC, PlayStation and Saturn (see other sections for reviews), and as you walk around the corridors of our office building between the hours of 1pm and 2pm, all that can be heard is the echo of tiny voices yelling abuse at each other.

The game is similar in principle to Tanx, which appeared as a shareware game on the Amiga about 5 years ago, the aim being to protect your band of faithful worms, and blow the bananas out of everything else on the screen that wriggles. You'd be forgiven for thinking that this is yet another game in the Lemmings series, as the sprites and the style of the graphics are very similar. But in fact, what we are dealing with here is not suicidal Lemmings... but homicidal worms, who are hell bent on destruction.

Players are provided with four hardy soldiers, and an array of weapons from straight forward bazookas to exploding sheep. In fact, there are thirteen weapons to choose from, as well as a number of options, such as teleporting, ninja roping and bungey jumping, to help players to manoeuvre their worms into the best strategic positions possible.

The games developers claim a massive four billion fractal generated landscapes to choose from, but as the first couple of airstrikes take huge chunks out of the scenery, the difference it makes is mostly cosmetic (unless you're unfortunate enough to have 75% of your team on a bridge, suspended 150 feet above a lake of molten lava, and some joker leaves a stick of dynamite conveniently on your man's head). With smooth parallax scrolling to view the action, and some genuinely funny animated cut-scenes Worms looks great, and the little fellas' comments as they get blown to smithereens are really quite entertaining (especially gratifying when you get an "Oi, nutter!" - but you do have to obliterate one of your own men for this particular gem).

So, how does it play? Well, as a group playing against each other it's totally addictive once you've gotten into it - or should that be, if you've gotten into it.

Played on your own however, against computer generated opponents, the social aspect of hurling abuse at a bunch of mates whilst trying desperately to sabotage their efforts to stay in the game is missing. In this way Worms is mildly entertaining on occasion, but erring on the side of sad to be honest.



Team 17 tell us that there will be a data disk available after Christmas to allow players to link up to 16 PCs via a network and play Worms en mass. This sounds like a great idea, but worries us slightly in that there are a possible 4 teams per PC, with 4 worms in each team. Performing some basic arithmetic will tell you that this means a potential assembly of 256 of the little beggars on one landscape. The programmers will either have to greatly increase the size of the landscape (which could degrade the gameplay) or limit the number of teams who can play - otherwise it will be a bit like placing the entire population of the UK on the Isle of Wight and dropping a nuke on them!

The verdict? Worms in company is an experience that some would say is one of the ultimate gamesplaying experiences. However, the aforementioned "some" fails to include any of the **MAXIMUM** team whatsoever.

★★★





STEEL PANTHERS

Releasing on the PC CD this month is Mindscape's latest offering to the world of strategy games - Steel Panthers.

Based in war-torn Europe and the Pacific from 1939 to 1945, it puts players in charge of a single squad or an entire battalion as any Allied or Axis nation. Players are provided with tanks, infantry, cavalry and a variety of additional support units with which to wage war.

As with most games of this genre, graphically it is not exactly stunning, but this is an acquired taste. Ask any hardened fan and they'll tell you that it's the depth of gameplay that is truly important. From the producers of Warlord I and II, Steel Panthers is everything you'd expect, with authentic WWII footage and over 200 digitised photographs of tanks adding an interesting dimension to the proceedings.

A must for any war game guru.

★★★

SU-27 FLANKER

One of the most terrifying things about flight sims is not the speed and altitude of travel, but the size of the damn manual. You know you're in for a long night the minute you pull the box of the shelf and throw it on to your desk with a thud.

Well, not being ones to disappoint, Mindscape have stayed true to tradition with the release of their military flight simulator - SU-27 Flanker - for Windows '95 on the PC CD. Based in Crimea, your mission as an ace pilot of one of the worlds best combat jets - the SU-27 - is to seek out and destroy the enemy. You can take up with either side in this conflict between Russian forces and Ukrainian militia, but be warned, leave the innocent civilians alone or there'll be trouble on an international scale.

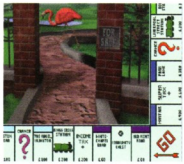
Mindscape have worked closely with Russian Aerospace professionals, to produce a game that is extremely accurate, right down to the effects of the elements on your weaponry system. In fact, it's a bit of an insult to the programming team to call it a game - more of an experience. We're assured by the experts that it's the closest you can get to flying the SU-27 without actually leaving solid ground - and we'd tend to believe them. It took us hours of patient reading and practice to become skilled at negotiating the Crimean terrain, but if you have the time and the inclination, it's an experience worth having.

Graphically, it's everything you'd expect, with authentic sound effects and superbly detailed gameplay, but it's not a game for the half hearted, only serious flight sim fans need apply.

★★★★







MONOPOLY

During the height of the 1930s depression in the United States, an unemployed heating engineer named Charles B Darrow had a brain wave, and designed the board game that we now recognise as Monopoly. Across the country families gather together for Christmas and Easter celebrations, and sure enough at some point in the proceedings that faithful old red and white box gets pulled out from under the drinks cabinet and dusted down for another marathon session of wheeler dealing.

There is cheating, dodgy dealings, and very often punches are thrown across the table (well, they are in my house), as your nearest and dearest display a sudden and disturbing case of greed. With all this in mind, one has to beg the question "Is it wise for Hasbro to take this experience to new levels of technology?"

In our opinion - yes.

Far from desecrating this traditional old relic it brings a fresh new dimension to the game, with high resolution 3D animated cut-scenes to represent the tokens moving around the board and landing on various properties.

Monopoly can be played by up to six players, with AI characters each with their own personality to compete against if you can't find anyone to take you on. But there's really no excuse for this, as it also has the option to link-up via a network or patch into the internet and play a Transatlantic match. The street names and currency are converted in real time, and the rule book can be customised to suit all participants (even cheating is permissible if you can get away with it).

Rounded off with a 1930s Ragtime beat to jolly things along, Monopoly is good clean family entertainment of a traditional nature gone hi-tech. The question you have to ask yourself is... are the on-line options and cute animations worth the extra fifteen quid it'll cost you over the price of the board game?

★★★



11TH HOUR

Following the storming success of The 7th Guest, which was the first CD-ROM title to hit the High Street, Virgin have been putting their minds to the creation of the sequel - 11th Hour - which is released on the PC this month. Finally.

The 7th Guest received mixed criticisms, as the innovative style and gameplay were offset with what some might call the arbitrary use of some shocking scenes. Virgin argued that the nastier scenes were a necessary part of establishing the atmosphere of the Hammer House of Horror style storyline, but nonetheless they have definitely toned down the gore in 11th Hour.

Morales, who has vanished whilst investigating the rotting abandoned mansion of the legendary toy maker Henry Stauf.

Once inside the decrepit house he finds himself confronted with puzzles and conundra, which once solved reveal pieces of video footage that take him further along the path to finding Robin.

The graphics in 11th Hour are stunning, with an awesome lighting effect from Carl Denning's torch as the explores the nooks and crannies of the haunted mansion.

Played in the first person, the puzzles are real brain benders, and challengers will definitely need the help of the psychic voice that offers assistance if they get stuck.

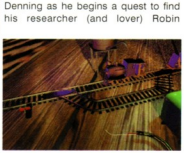
In addition, the storyline is genuinely intriguing and the FMV sequences between stages had us glued to our PC. Undoubtedly the way to get the most out of this game is in a darkened room with the volume up high.

It's compelling gameplay with a real twist at the end... All this just goes to prove that gratuitous violence is not the main ingredient to making a great game.

However, the bottom line is that 11th Hour is basically a more advanced version of 7th Guest. If you liked that, fine. If you want more from your CD-ROM interactive experience, it would be best to look elsewhere.

★★★

Smash hit sequel to 7th Guest finally hits the streets





MANIC KARTS

Virgin's latest offering to the racing game genre is Manic Karts, a lawn mower engined, tubular framed challenge against the clock - with seven other lunatics bashing you from behind at every opportunity. It looks strikingly similar to Super Karts, which Virgin release last year, so how can they justify this remake to the buying public?

Players can compete in either a single race, or one of three championship seasons of differing skill levels. The are 16 tracks in eight different countries to compete on, each with its own unique problems to overcome. Choices of Kart are limited to engine size - 50cc up to 250cc - but these can be suped up by buying accessories such as turbo charged fuel and super grip tyres with cash winnings from the league. If all these options (coupled with skill on the track, of course) fail to put competitors in poll position - then they can always cheat by bribing race officials and gaining valuable points on the league table.

With smooth scrolling, texture-mapped graphics, Manic Karts looks good and plays quite fast. The tracks are all very different and offer a lot of variety, but the first couple were a bit too easy for our liking.

Not terribly original, but at the price of £19.99... it's not a bad buy.

★★★





3DO

While Sony owners get to grips with Doom, and Saturn owners get into Virtua Cop and the almighty VF2, it seems that 3DO are incapable of bringing out any similar "killer app" for their system. What we have this month is a collection of sequels and mission discs, with only one truly original new release - Electronic Arts' fairly impressive Foes of Ali. The message from 3DO at the moment seems to be buy their system now because M2's going to better than all the rest. It's just a shame that in the here and now, Sega and Sony owners get the better software. As **MAXIMUM** has said before, it isn't down to the machine's deficiencies - basically it's a lack of imagination and programming skill, along with only a half-hearted commitment from third parties. Indeed, it is somewhat significant that by far the greatest 3DO game this month is a new levels for an established classic. There's little more we can add here about the state of the 3DO market. The basic message is: we all know that 3DO is capable of great things. Witness Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Need For Speed, Space Hulk and FIFA. It's time for more software of this quality and less of the Battlesports and POeds. Let's hope for better things in 1996.

RETURN FIRE: MAPS O' DEATH

100 more levels for classic 3DO title!

The MAXIMUM team breathed a collective sigh of relief when the expansion disc for Return Fire came in, as we finally had a 3DO release worthy of review space (and even a small Extended Play). For those unaware of this game's predecessor, Return Fire was the first (and seemingly only) 3DO title to feature an in-depth and highly playable game peculiar only to that system. Seeing that the success of the game wasn't likely to be repeated for a while, Silent Software seemed to have sat down and spent the intervening time creating an expansion disc, as they knew they had a quality product that could be added to.

This has lead to the appallingly-named 'Maps O' Death', which features 100 new missions designed to test the mettle of the very finest Return Fire fanatics. Providing you have the original Return Fire game, you're in for another load of levels from the cunningly warped minds of Silent Software. Expect horribly difficult theatres of war with less vehicles available and some decidedly odd scenery (such as the chessboard and SOS levels), all of which makes the Return Fire sequel an excellent 3DO addition.

Owners of the original know the quality of the title already, and those wondering what the Return Fire experience is all about can find out more in our Extended Play, but the main selling point of Maps O' Death is the relatively low price tag of the second add-on (£20), making it all the more tempting to buy. Be warned however, that this expansion is simply more of the same; there is no extra scenery or vehicles to discover, just differently positioned enemy encampments for you to encounter. Having said that, Maps O' Death was a thoroughly enjoying return to the original game, and a chance to remember just how well constructed it was.

Providing you remember that this only an expansion disc with no new



graphics (but is a low-cost addition consisting of huge numbers of well constructed levels), this is an essential purchase for the 3DO player. This is more of the same, and fortunately 'the same' was exceptional to begin with - leading to a **MAXIMUM** recommendation. If only the current crop of original 3DO software packed as much clout...

★★★★

FOES OF ALI - The mighty Muhammed in a mauling marathon!

The signs of that elusive 3DO quality product are here; Electronic Arts have developed a boxing simulator that hopes to eclipse the likes of JVC Victory Boxing and Boxers' Road. In their attempts to reach that goal, they have pulled out all the stops graphically, so that the visuals really do add an air of professionalism to a beleaguered machine; the polygon fighters are almost on a par with the JVC title, featuring textured-mapped skin and detailed faces that suffer bruising and cuts during the bouts.

The game itself sees you playing as one of this century's supreme fighters, Muhammed Ali, on a journey through his career and string of fighting successes. There is also the opportunity to play as any of his opponents, and in any combination, as well as a comprehensive list of other features that you would expect from the programmers over at EA. A multitude of camera angles add to the excitement somewhat, as the fight can be viewed at any





point from the roof to the eyes of your own boxer. Most of the angles are for show, and only a few can be used effectively in the ring itself.

Playability is the overriding factor here, and at first the fighting gels together rather well, but that actual punching and weaving isn't that fluid; consisting of moderately-animated jabs and hooks. Without perseverance, these boxing rounds can turn into simple button-hammering affairs with your pugilists exchanging blows in a rather tedious fashion. Learn special techniques and timing however, and your bouts can change into something approaching excitement, although the fights themselves never become feverpitch battles.

This is a well-crafted and solid 3DO release that should suit boxing simulators' needs adequately, but didn't have the necessary excitement to hold our interest in an increasingly expansive sea of next generation software.

★★★

PO'ed - A fine 3D blasting adventure at last?









PO'ed had been in development for months, and we were initially quite thankful for the finished PAL version to be actually available given the long wait endured by 3DO Doom fanatics craving a decent bit of 3D action. This was hoped to be a credible stop-gap until the id classic finally materialised; and some were even expecting it to topple Doom from its lofty pedestal.

Unfortunately, PO'ed is none of the things it set out to be. It has, however, managed to acquire the dubious title of 'worst 3D action title ever seen on any format', with the exception of PlayStation Crime Crackers and some early PC public-domain games (indeed, the graphics and gameplay are very reminiscent of such past atrocities). As any prospective buyer of 3DO games should know, the machine has suffered from a huge number of terrible software releases since the launch (along with a few gems along the way), but nothing prepared us for the phenomenally low quality of this title.

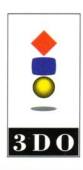
There simply are no innovative, new or entertaining aspects to this game. What it does have in abundance are negative points which obviously do the game (and the machine) no favours whatsoever. Starting with the graphics, it seems that Any Channel have attempt a vague stab at a new and improved 3D graphics engine. The result is a constantly glitching environment with untextured (and unshaded) floors, and paper-thin 2D slopes and lift platforms. Worse still are the wall textures when viewed in detail - they don't so much glitch as warp and convulse across the screen - this is polygon folding at its very worst, and is a very disheartening example of the 3DO's 3D handling abilities.

Worse still are monsters inhabiting the area you start from. In an effort to inject a degree of wacky American 'humour' into this title, the programmers have designed the primary adversaries to be walking bottoms and giant lips (although the 'hilarious' manual describes them as mutant dogs, or in their words: "Man's best friend... not!"), with semi-naked females carrying bazookas to follow. The main problem here is one of pixelation; when any enemy walks even remotely near to your character, they turn horribly blocky and loose the small amount of detail they once had.

Yet there is worse to come. The weapons are also a vain attempt at injecting humour into the action, with your initial item consisting of a frying pan (as you are the cook on board a space ship), followed by a butcher knife and the familiar-sounding BFD90. The final insult came in the form of the control system, which was disgraceful to say the least. Your character's momentum sometimes moves him of his own accord, and any jumps you make onto moving platforms are left up to chance rather than precision. A truly unbelievable control method, and the final nail in the coffin for this travesty of a game.

Any Channel have managed to create a title with less to offer the 3DO punter than even Wolfenstein 3D could manage; which is no mean feat. The 3DO company should hang their collective heads in shame for releasing such unbelievable tripe on the unsuspecting public. Many more games of this nature, and this could be the death of the 3DO. Any owner of the so-called 'wonder machine' should be greatly worried by the ongoing situation. Avoid this garbage at all costs.

★

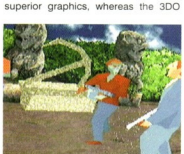


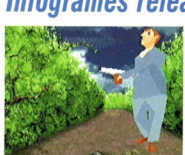
ALONE IN THE DARK - Edward Carnaby's zombie nightmare!

Infogames have created some of the most memorable PC titles in the past five years, and none more so than the Alone in the Dark trilogy. When they first released the original game, it was hailed as a major breakthrough, and the second (and more involved) game received even greater praise. Now the PC games player has moved on, demanding more interaction and superior graphics, whereas the 3DO player seems to be stuck in years gone by, finding that the choice of many current 3DO releases are simple port-overs of age-old PC titles that simply don't cut the mustard anymore.

So after the debacle that was Wolfenstein 3D, beleaguered 3DO owners can now feast their eyes on a two-year old PC release; Alone in the Dark 2. When the original version of Alone 2 was made available in the dim and distant past, it was generally held as an entertaining adventure title that relied too heavily on random gun combat. Now the 3DO version has arrived, prospective buyers can look forward to exactly the same game, but with inferior visuals.

Infogrames release 3DO update of PC classic





It seems rather unfortunate that the 3DO copy arrived at exactly the same time as the PlayStation version of Alone in the Dark 2. The Sony conversion boasts texture-mapped characters moving at higher speeds and with less loading time, whilst the poor old 3DO struggles with flat shaded polygons, a smaller screen size and a chugging frame rate. Slow-loading antics aside, the game is an entertaining and genuinely atmospheric horror story, but only if you've never seen an Alone in the Dark title before, and can cope with the problems present in this conversion.

This is another elderly port-over that should have been available (and converted to run acceptably quickly) at least a year ago, and once again shows a distressing lack of innovative and quality software on Trip Hawkins' wonder machine.

★★

THE NEXT ISSUE OF

MAXIMUM

The next edition of MAXIMUM promises to yield a wealth of information - expect to see in-depth coverage on Sega's next generation of arcade hits. We'll be taking apart the likes of Manx TT SuperBike and AM2's frankly excellent Fighting Vipers. The latter title in particular has come in for a bit of undeserved criticism - mainly from people who haven't played it. We tell you why it is worthy successor to the excellent Virtua Fighter 2. Speaking of which, our VF2 coverage continues apace with the first in our series of in-depth features on getting the most out of each character. The secrets of Saturn Virtua Cop are revealed, along with an in-depth feature on Battle Area Toshinden 2 on PlayStation (providing it meets **MAXIMUM**'s expectation of quality). Other planned Extended Plays include the Saturn debut for Treasure - Guardian Heroes - an awesome sprite-based RPG/adventure/beat 'em up. Also expect some excellent gear on the forthcoming PlayStation edition of Street Fighter Alpha - including an interview with the R&D staff behind this first decent PlayStation sprite-based beat 'em up.

In terms of news, expect great things. First port of call for the **MAXIMUM** team will be the ATEI show in January, where Namco will be revealing their new games including Soul Edge (where this rather excellent artwork originates from).

All of this is pretty much in the bag - and there's plenty more to look forward to as well. **MAXIMUM** stands for quality in the field of arcade and next generation console gaming - expect no substandard substitutes.



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